A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

NEW TIMES

the man who knew the secret of the Negev

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PROGRAMME SIBERIA: TAPPING THE MINERAL WEALTH

JOURNEY INTO THE BUSH

PEREZ ESQUIVEL: "LEAVE THE STARS TO THE LOVERS"

1917–1987

TIME AND PEOPLE

He was a remarkable man. The rather grim visage expressive of a powerful personality that looks out at us from photographs concealed a warm, tender heart. He could hold huge audiences spellbound, but a single unjust word could wound him to the quick. He travelled widely, but the more countries he visited the greater grew his love for Soviet Russia. Like all people with a strong sense of humour he knew how to make others laugh, but he rarely laughed himself. He loved people, but he could not tolerate fools. He used to say that all he needed to make him happy was one "freshly-washed shirt," and he had nothing but contempt for philistinism.

Vladimir Mayakovsky was always and in everything a citizen-poet. The intellectuals of old Russia reacted variously to the revolution. Some were frightened. Others took a wait-and-see attitude. Mayakovsky made his choice at once and unconditionally. "This is my revolution. Went to Smolny. Worked. Did everything that had to be done."

Autumn 1919. A critical moment in the civil war. The fate of Soviet power was in the balance. Vladimir Mayakovsky went to the Russian Telegraph Agency (ROSTA) to draw posters on topical issues accompanied by arresting captions in verse. This was his fighting front, and he devoted himself heart and soul to it. He worked practically around the clock. At times he wrote as many as 60-70 captions for posters in a single day. And the next day they were on the lips of the thousands.

"Mobilized and enlisted by the October call-up," is how Mayakovsky described his own place in life. For him to write meant to fight for man and mankind. He invested his poetry with so much passion, such a wealth of ideas and images, he depicted his time so vividly that he himself became an integral part of it. They were so much at one—Mayakovsky and the revolution—that the two are often identified with each other.

"I am a man of decision, I want to speak direct to my descendants and not wait to see what my future critics will tell them," he declared. To this day his poetry needs no intermediary to stir the hearts of the millions.

Mayakovsky against the background of ROSTA posters

Announcement of a debate between Mayakovsky and Lunacharsky, the first People's Commissar of Education

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CONTENTS

2
Editorial
THREATS AGAIN!

3
Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain visits the U.S.S.R.

4
Vadim Loginov, U.S.S.R. Deputy Foreign Minister.
THE ENERGY OF INTERACTION

6
Opinion poll
Stephen H. Rhinesmith (U.S.A.) and Roddick B. Byers (Canada)

7
Panorama

10
NATO
Vyacheslav Boikov.
DISTURBED BEEHIVE

12
Reflections
Adolfo Perez Esquivel (Argentina).
LEAVE THE STARS TO THE LOVERS

14
F.R.G.
Alexander Tolpegin. **NEW OLD PRIORITIES**

16
Soviet Union
Evgeny Shemyakin. **IT'S TIME WE GOT FUNDAMENTAL RESULTS FROM FUNDAMENTAL SCIENCE**

Kindergarten in a Namibian refugee camp.

Mordechai Vanunu faces silencing in Israel.

Emblem of the encounter between veterans of the 1972 Soviet-Canadian matches.

19
New Times investigates INTERNATIONAL OF RESISTANCE— BORROWED NAME, BORROWED MONEY, BORROWED IDEAS

22
Behind the scenes
Evgeny Korshunov. **A BIASSED TRIAL PENDING**

24
Indonesia
Alexander Yuriev. **THE ARMY AND ITS OPPONENTS**

26
Joint ventures
Alexander Kuzmin and Boris Kozlov. **MICROMED**

27
Literature
Leonid Mlechin. **SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT**
Dialogue with Zdenek Pluhar (Czechoslovakia)

29
U.S.S.R.—Iraq
Andrei Vasilinov. **TIME IS THE BEST JUDGE**

30
Southern Africa
Nikolai Reshetnyak. **JOURNEY INTO THE BUSH**

32
Sports
Albert Pin. **HIGHLIGHTS RELIVED**

Cover: **Photo by B. Zadvil**

9 A demonstration being dispersed in Santiago

BANISHED TO CHILE CHICO

After 12 years of emigration, Clodomiro Almeyda, General Secretary of the Chilean Socialist Party, clandestinely returned home — only to be banished to the small town of Chile Chico on Pinochet's personal order.

NEW TIMES

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FROM OUR MAILBAG

●

In my country, Portugal, even the most conservative elements in society and television, which is controlled by the right, are finding it difficult to "interpret" Soviet initiatives in the field of détente and international cooperation. But in my view, there is no doubt that these initiatives speak volumes about the peaceful, progressive and democratic aspirations of the Soviet government. There is no way one can consider them a propaganda ploy. It is my hope that your efforts will provide a shot in the arm for all progressive forces in the world.

JOAO COUTINHO
Lisbon, Portugal

●

The U.S. military presence in the Mediterranean is the cause of an exceptionally grave and tense situation in the region. Using the fight against terrorism as an excuse, the U.S. continues to pour oil on the flames. Even imperialist European governments feel more hesitant and less enthusiastic about giving their backing to the adventurist and inflammatory policy of the United States. A serious crisis of "allied loyalty" [or should we say "servile dependency"] is developing in the European camp.

VINCENZO SENIA
Rome, Italy

●

It is generally recognized today that the existence of two German states — the socialist G.D.R. and the capitalist F.R.G. — is an indisputable factor in the balance of forces in Europe and the creation of an international security system. Peace on German soil, peace in Europe and peace in the world are a single issue.

Dr UWE KLENNER
Berlin, G.D.R.

EDITORIAL

THREATS AGAIN?

It has become traditional for the Pentagon to mark every new year of the Reagan presidency with another edition of the best seller "Soviet Military Power" (read: "the Soviet military threat"). There was a time when the publication of this booklet was accompanied by a television appearance of the President himself. Surrounded by maps, diagrams and estimates, Ronald Reagan, wearing a broad smile, would try to persuade his compatriots that the U.S.S.R. was "on the doorstep of their poorly defended home." This time, weakened by the Iran-contras scandal and his first press conference after a four-month interval, Reagan was hardly suited for the role of a high-pressure salesman. Instead, the author of the introduction to the sixth edition of the booklet, Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger in person, appeared on the screen.

He let loose on his audience and newsmen attending the TV press conference an avalanche of "devastating data" from the booklet—about the fourfold superiority of the U.S.S.R. over the U.S. in ICBMs and submarine-based missiles, its twofold preponderance in fighter aircraft, and ninefold advantage in anti-aircraft missiles. And so on, and so forth. Moscow, according to the Defence Secretary, has scrapped the ABM treaty, is building up its war industry exclusively by drawing on the latest Western technology in civilian branches. Or take this "fact" cited on p. 112 of the booklet: "Recent Soviet irradiations of Free World manned surveillance aircraft and ships could have caused serious eye damage to observers." Asked by Western newsmen for specific instances of this, the Defence Secretary could cite none.

In other words, the statement had no foundation in fact. Like most of the other falsehoods or tendentiously selected facts in the booklet, the avowed purpose of which is to tell the truth about Soviet military potential and intentions.

Why this rank piece of misinformation? Why deny what is recognized by most U.S. experts—the actual parity of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. in the military sphere? Why pass over in silence the Soviet proposals to rid the planet of nuclear weapons by the end of the century, to prevent militarization of outer space, to eliminate the medium-range missiles in Europe? In the section "The U.S.S.R. and Arms Control," where, if only for the sake of decency, some mention might have been made of these proposals, there is not a word about them.

The above questions are not difficult to answer.

As a rule, the Pentagon "discovers" Soviet superiority in precisely those types of armaments for which it is out to obtain new appropriations from Congress.

In other words, the "Soviet Military Power" is a salvo fired at the Capitol, where opposition to the Defence Department's plans is mounting at present.

The Pentagon guns are trained on American businessmen, who are evincing growing interest in promoting trade with Soviet partners, and also on the American politicians who are convinced of the need to normalize Soviet-American relations. And, lastly, on those relations themselves, in which a glimmer of hope for improvement has appeared.

The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., like the rest of mankind, are building the road to the 21st century. Can that road be paved with mutual recriminations, with whipped-up tension? It cannot—of that Moscow is firmly convinced. Moscow is looking for avenues to mutual understanding, for points of contact. Washington is still looking for something else.

Summit meeting

It is twelve years since a British Prime Minister has paid an official visit to the Soviet Union, although throughout the 1960s and the 1970s high-level contacts were sufficiently systematic and productive whether Britain's government was Conservative or Labour. Regrettably, however, bilateral relations subsequently became erratic both politically and economically, while now and then they cooled for a long time.

The breakthrough occurred in December 1984, when Mikhail Gorbachev led a Soviet parliamentary delegation to Britain. At the time the totally new approach, shown by the Soviet visitors to the discussion of acute international and bilateral issues, was noted in Britain.

Since then there have been important and useful contacts at different levels. A representative British parliamentary delegation has visited the U.S.S.R., while last summer Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze went to London. Significant bilateral agreements have been signed.

The stagnating relations between our two great powers, former allies who, as Security Council members, bear a special international responsibility, have gradually yielded to the fruitful dialogue so vital for the world today.

Moscow has urged London and its allies to adopt the new political thinking in the search for joint solutions to today's acute global and regional problems, and attempt to humanize international relations.

Such was the spirit that characterized the Gorbachev-Thatcher dialogue in Moscow, and this is encouraging. It was a frank and honest exchange in which no corners were cut, and in which both complaints and criticism were voiced. No doubt, that is how relations should develop today at intergovernment level and diplomatic talks be conducted, without holding something back, embellishing the real state of affairs, or evading the frank appraisal of each other's stand. This gives greater weight to the agreements reached and clarifies differences, thereby enabling efforts to be focussed on narrowing divergences of opinion on the priorities.

"Soviet-British dialogue," Mikhail Gorbachev observed, "is an integral and significant factor of modern European and world politics."

Today the peoples of the two countries face new problems that require urgent solution by joint or parallel effort. It is little wonder that the Moscow talks emphasized aspects of curbing the arms race.

Here the differences are still great. Mikhail Gorbachev categorically disagreed with the view that security could be based on power politics. That is an antiquated concept, and one that has already caused a great deal of trouble since the end of the war. The Soviet concept of new political thinking rests precisely on the renunciation of power politics in today's international affairs, and the rejection of the doctrine of nuclear "deterrence," which only serves to intensify the arms race.

However, in her statements Margaret Thatcher frequently professed her faith in the effectiveness of "strength" and "toughness" in East-West relations, her dangerous conviction that nuclear weapons offer a reliable means of restraint and even play a peace-making role. She quoted Winston Churchill as having said that the world should not abandon nuclear weapons until it had found other ways of preserving peace. But we remember another warning Sir Winston issued when advising East and West—at a time when the U.S.S.R., following the U.S.A., got possession of nuclear weapons—to conclude peace on earth before being forced to conclude peace with God Almighty in heaven.

There evidently still exists, to judge from statements by Mrs Thatcher, a misunderstanding of Soviet intentions on the world scene. She mentioned the apprehension our avowed aim to work for the worldwide triumph of socialism has supposedly generated. However, Mikhail Gorbachev insisted that the Sovet Union, while having absolute faith in socialism's advantages over capitalism, does not seek ideological expansion by any means. On the contrary, it urges the building up of an appropriate machinery for peaceful competition between the different social systems and the establishment in international affairs of universal moral and ethic standards.

The differences in approach to humanitarian problems and the issue of human rights are predictable, as here ideological criteria are probably most in evidence. In this respect the West adopts a senior statesmanlike attitude and resorts to speculation. We do not at all fear discussions of acute issues, nor do we try to evade such discussions. But, as Mikhail Gorbachev observed, "if we are going to talk about human rights let us talk about all rights, especially rights that concern millions."

The Kremlin, Moscow, March 30. Before the talks.

There also appears to be a dearth of understanding of the Soviet attitude to relations between Western Europe and the U.S. The classic cliché of a supposed Soviet desire to thrust a wedge between the Western allies was stressed. Moscow, in fact, sees things in a totally different light: it recognizes the historic ties between the states and regions of the world today and merely urges Western Europe to rid itself of its fears with regard to the U.S.S.R. and make a greater contribution to world politics.

The Soviet leader noted frankly that in taking the problem of medium-range missiles out of the "package," we had counted on British and French support. The U.S.S.R. has for the time being set aside the nuclear potentials of these two countries, although they continue to grow and improve, with the sole aim of stimulating arms reduction talks. So where are reciprocal manifestations of flexibility and readiness to compromise? All we have heard so far is the wish to retain nuclear weapons at any price, supplemented by none too convincing figures to demonstrate the Warsaw Treaty's "superiority" in short-range missile systems and conventional armed forces.

The British stand illustrates the continued dangerous delusion that SDI will serve to preserve the balance and not undermine international stability, and that the "star wars" project has no bearing on solutions to the problem of cutting strategic armaments. The Soviet leader has clearly stated in this connection that it is of strategic importance to link cuts in strategic offensive weapons with the non-placing of arms in outer space. We shall never break up that package, the Soviet leader stressed.

Clearly, the U.S.S.R.'s many unilateral professions of good will are soon "forgotten" and concessions are continually sought from it. The fundamental imbalance between East and West plainly resides not in the ratio of their military strengths, but in the extent to which the two sides are prepared resolutely to curtail and completely eliminate weapons of mass destruction.

Britain can be envisaged as playing a more active and independent role in securing at least those agreements on curbing the arms race that it is prepared to conclude. Moscow believes this role could be far more productive.

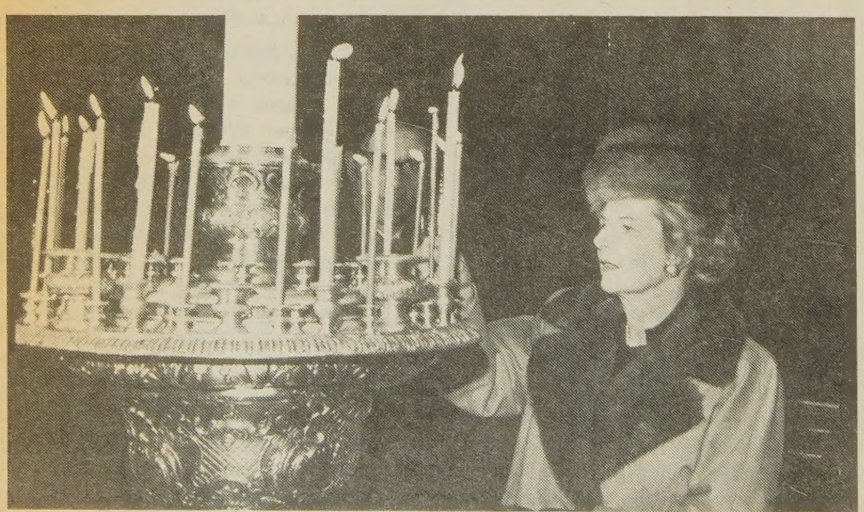
We want to find ways and means of building a world with fewer arms. Confidence and trust cannot be created from nothing.

"Face-to-face meetings," Mikhail Gorbachev said, "are the best means of finding points of contact and bringing positions on concrete affairs closer together. Here one must know not only how to speak, but also how to listen, not only how to listen, but also how to understand each other and jointly seek solutions for the highly complex integrals in the world today. That is the spirit in which we would like to conduct our political dialogue with the U.K."

In the course of the visit the following documents were signed: an agreement on cooperation in the study, exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes; an agreement on improving the hot line between the Kremlin and 10, Downing St.; a memorandum on the understanding reached by the two governments on new trends for cooperation in the areas of information, culture and education; and an agreement to provide each other with sites on which to build new embassy premises in Moscow and London respectively.

Confidence is built up gradually. Here patience, tact, and the will for and belief in success are essential. The Soviet public believes that Margaret Thatcher's visit to the U.S.S.R. and her talks with Mikhail Gorbachev are a major step in this direction.

Margaret Thatcher at the Zagorsk Trinity-St. Sergius monastery.



The Foreign Ministers' Committee of the Warsaw Treaty states has just met in Moscow.

Ten years have passed since this committee, set up by the Political Consultative Committee, the highest body of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, met for the first time. However, at the current session in Moscow, rather than exchange jubilee greetings, ministers preferred to concern themselves with detailed exchange of views on the situation in Europe and the world, which remains complex, acute and dangerous.

In their final communiqué, the ministers noted that the major proposals put forward by the Soviet Union at Reykjavik signified a fundamentally new approach to the problems of disarmament. They reemphasized the determination of the allied socialist states to secure deep and radical cuts in, and the eventual abolition of, nuclear weapons, prevent the arms race from escalating into outer space, and ensure that the Soviet-American ABM treaty is strictly observed. They are of the view that everything should be done, by means of further, in-depth political dialogue between states, to see to it that the accommodations drafted are translated into concrete agreements.

There was unanimous support for the Soviet proposal for the immediate signing of a separate Soviet-American agreement on the complete elimination of American and Soviet medium-range missiles in Europe. Similar approval greeted the Soviet announcement that as soon as the said agreement was signed, we would, with the consent of the governments concerned, withdraw longer-range tactical missiles deployed in the G.D.R. and Czechoslovakia. Our readiness to enter at once into negotiations on tactical missiles was also welcomed.

The ministers were likewise unanimous in advocating an immediate end to efforts to implement the Pentagon's "star wars" programme and develop such projects as the European Defence Initiative. They reaffirmed their determination to see a complete and universal nuclear test ban.

The Moscow meeting adopted a statement on the prohibition of chemical weapons. The earliest successful completion of negotiations to institute a complete and universal ban on chemical weapons was announced as a foreign policy priority for the allied countries.

To evolve mutually acceptable solutions at the talks we have put forward a range of new proposals to give notification of the existence of chemical weapon stores, ensure that the civilian chemical industry does not manufacture such weapons, and exercise on-site

The energy of interaction

VADIM LOGINOV, U.S.S.R. Deputy Foreign Minister

control, which would include international inspection, as well as verification whenever required.

At the same time, the Warsaw Treaty states have appealed to all other countries to do nothing that would add to the difficulty of reaching mutually acceptable accords at the negotiations or retard them; not to produce chemical weapons, binary or multi-component weapons included, as U.S. militarists are planning to do; not to station chemical weapons in the territories of other countries; withdraw such weapons from the territories of other countries in which they are stationed; and prohibit the deployment of such weapons within states in whose territories there are no chemical weapons at present.

The ministers discussed in detail issues related to the implementation of the programme put forward by the Warsaw Treaty states in June 1986 for substantial cuts in armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe. As will be remembered, at its meeting at that time in Budapest, the Political Consultative Committee adopted an appeal to the NATO states and all European countries to cut the strength of the forces of states belonging to the opposing military-political alliances by between 100,000 and 150,000 men on either side within the next year or two so that by the early 1990s the ground forces and tactical aviation of the two alliances would be reduced by roughly 25 per cent over the whole of Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals. In this way the strength of the opposed armed forces groupings in Europe would be cut by a million-odd men, with priority given to the reduction of troop concentrations along the boundary between the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO.

Though the European public welcomed this programme, for a long time the NATO leadership avoided giving an answer under the pretext of the need to examine the far-reaching proposals of the socialist countries in detail.

It seems that to this day NATO has no succinct common stand that can be openly compared with the Budapest programme. Some NATO countries are clearly interested in reaching an understanding, while others take a more restrained view of the prospect. However, the U.S. and some of its chief NATO allies are advocating not so much a reduction, as a buildup of armed forces and armaments in accordance with the notorious "position-of-strength" policy.

However, the governments must now take into consideration the attitudes of the Western public, who definitely favour negotiations based on the Budapest programme. As was justly noted at Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with members of the Committee of Foreign Ministers, the initiatives put forward by the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Treaty states with the aim of averting nuclear disaster and achieving disarmament are gaining the sympathy and support of the world public and changing the atmosphere in which international affairs are being conducted right across the board.

In Vienna currently representatives of the 23 Warsaw Treaty and NATO states have initiated consultations that are being held in tandem with the all-European meeting. A mandate for future negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments from the Atlantic to the Urals is being drafted.

The foreign ministers emphasized in Moscow that the states they represent advocate a lowering of the level of military confrontation in Europe, effected in such a way as to ensure that moves towards arms reduction make it possible to reduce, if not completely eliminate, the possibility of a surprise attack. The implementation of the proposals put forward by the G.D.R. and Czechoslovakia as well as by Bulgaria and Romania, to set up nuclear and chemical weapon-free zones in various parts of Europe could make a significant contribution to achieving this objective.

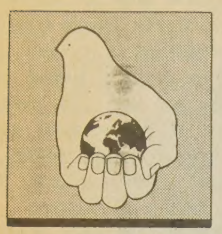
Special attention was paid to discussing every aspect of the all-European process and charting a course for the allied countries conducive to a successful outcome to the Vienna meeting. The socialist countries maintain that, given comprehensive development, the all-European process could offer a model for a system of all-embracing security. We regard this as a position of principle. It is enough to recall that the Warsaw Treaty, concluded in 1955, opens with an expression of the desire of the allied socialist states "to establish a system of European collective security based on the participation of all European states, irrespective of their social and political systems, which would make it possible to concert their efforts in safeguarding the peace of Europe."

The Vienna meeting has now reached the stage for responsible action and decision. Though all would seem ready to pay lip service to this, in practice the representatives of many NATO countries want to take disarmament problems out of the Helsinki process and bar the neutral and non-aligned countries from discussing them.

In Moscow, the foreign ministers stated that the issues of security and disarmament must be considered and resolved within the context of the all-European process. Such is the tenor of the proposal put forward by Poland at the Vienna meeting whereby the Stockholm Conference mandate on disarmament would be supplemented with the elaboration of such measures as the gradual reduction of military activity, particularly of the two military alliances, notification of independent air and naval exercises, and the extension of confidence-building measures to the territories of all countries participating in the all-European process. These measures would serve to establish military equilibrium at the lowest possible level.

The further development and intensification of the all-European process is also served by such actions on the part of the socialist states as: the proposals to convene an economic forum in Prague, a conference on scientific and technological cooperation in Budapest, an ecological forum, the Soviet proposal to hold a conference in Moscow to promote humanitarian cooperation, and other initiatives to encourage exchanges in the spheres of information, culture and education.

It is clear that the foreign ministers of the fraternal countries have shown their readiness to do everything in their power to ensure that the all-European meeting in Vienna is characterized by a constructive and business-like approach and that its decisions at once give expression to the new thinking in international affairs, contribute to stable peace and security, and promote cooperation in Europe and the world as a whole. From Moscow they have appealed to all participants in the Vienna meeting to bring it to a close with the adoption of substantial and balanced decisions. ■



IS A NUCLEAR-FREE WORLD POSSIBLE?

AND WHAT IN YOUR OPINION ARE THE PREREQUISITES FOR INTERNATIONAL STABILITY?

Stephen H. Rhinesmith:

NO SIMPLE ANSWERS

Stephen H. Rhinesmith is a U.S. ambassador and co-ordinator of the President's U.S.-Soviet Exchange Initiative.

What will our future be like? Will it be non-nuclear? A nuclear-free world is a complex idea and there are no simple answers. I think it depends not only on the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., but on many other countries as well, and on the people who live in them. Although, of course, it does depend to a great extent on the relationship between our two powers. It is quite plain that here trust and confidence are, it can be said, of paramount importance. When we talk of cultural exchange programmes, what we actually mean are attempts to consolidate mutual trust as a preliminary for progress towards an arms control and disarmament agreement. Certainly, U.S. national security will always be a priority with us. However, we want to prevent human survival being jeopardized. The process, by which I mean the way towards agreements, is slow and tortuous not only for the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., but also for our allies, and other countries with access to nuclear weapons, as they too will need to draw the appropriate conclusions.

For many years I have tried to help people with their own particular idea of their identities to enable them better to understand people who are different. I think that unless everyone in the world realizes how he or she fits into the range of cultures and political and philosophical trends, unless each one of us can define his place, we shall continue to encounter conservatism, chauvinism and suspicion, and there will be no stability. Consequently, summing up, I would like to say that stability is very closely linked both with economics and with human concepts, and it is in these areas that much is being done today within the context of American-Soviet relations.

This year more U.S. performers will visit the U.S.S.R. than ever before, the exchange of specialists in various fields of science and social affairs will be more intensive, and the number of U.S. school students visiting their Soviet counterparts will jump from 1,500 to 4,000. We hope more Soviet citizens, especially young people, will visit the U.S. I was told at the Committee of Youth Organizations of the U.S.S.R. that there will be at least 300 of them. We plan to arrange one more Jurmala-type conference, this time in New York State, and more than 250 people are to come to it from the U.S.S.R.

Of course, we still do not see eye to eye on human rights, emigration and other matters relating to the free flow of information and the exchange of ideas and people. However, I would like to say that today private organizations in the U.S. are finding it much easier and simpler to cooperate with the Soviet side than they did only comparatively recently. Hopefully, the U.S. private sector will show keen interest in being a partner in the changes taking place in your country.

■

Roddick B. Byers:

A WORTHY OBJECTIVE, BUT...

Roddick B. Byers is director of the Centre for International and Strategic Studies, York University, Canada.

I suspect that a nuclear-free world is not going to happen. It is a worthy objective, but, as you know, both East and West have relied upon nuclear weapons for security for more than forty years now, and I think in one point or another that will probably continue given the complexity of the situation. Besides, we have to remember that, in addition to the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., other countries also have nuclear weapons.

So from that perspective I think that we will see the security environment in the year 2000 with some nuclear weapons for purposes of security. However, it is essential to have drastic reductions in the number of nuclear weapons. And in that sense Reykjavik was certainly an important step in that direction. The Americans and the Soviets must continue to negotiate those reductions.

As for SDI, for economic, political and technological reasons, the vision of this project held by President Reagan is not going to come off.

Speaking about the real foundations of international stability, I would single out two aspects. First is that the entire world, both East and West, could be better off with some form of offensive and defensive combination for strategic stability, with drastically reduced levels of offensive nuclear weapons. This idea is historically compatible with Soviet views on security.

The second issue is the relationship between nuclear and conventional weapons, which is what concerns many Europeans. In that sense I am pleased to see that General Secretary Gorbachev has asked that to be discussed within the context of the European disarmament talks.

■

CHINA

Achievements, problems

● THE SIXTH CHINESE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS IS HOLDING ITS FIFTH SESSION IN PEKING.

Deputies to the supreme body of state power are discussing a report presented by Zhao Ziyang, Premier of the P.R.C. State Council and acting General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, which deals with the government's activities over the past year. They will also adopt a plan for economic and social development and approve the 1987 state budget.

The session noted that China had made progress in the socio-economic field over the past year, and that on the whole the economy had registered a steady advance. The gross output in industry and farming was up 9.3 per cent on the previous year. The grain crop in 1986 totalled 391.090 million tons, or 11.980 million tons more than in 1985. Real incomes, taking price increases on consumer goods and public services into account, rose by 13 per cent in urban areas and 3.2 per cent in rural areas.

At the same time it was noted that acute problems remained. The proportion of investment in crucial building programmes was relatively low. For a variety of reasons, last year's state budget had closed with a deficit of 7.08 billion yuans, retail prices of some commodities had risen by an average of 6 per cent, and hard currency spending and earnings had failed to balance.

Reform of the economic machinery will continue this year; according to Zhao Ziyang, this will entail greater involvement on the part of industrial enterprizes so as to make them relatively independent economic units operating on a self-supporting basis.

At the present stage, great significance attaches to efforts to extend foreign economic links, make efficient use of foreign investment and sophisticated technology and equipment and increase hard currency earnings through exports. Zhao Ziyang stressed that it was important to attract foreign investors to joint ventures based on mixed assets or funded by foreign capital. He underscored the significance of consistency in granting privileges established by the State Council to foreign businessmen and outlined measures to provide still more favourable conditions for foreign investment.

As for ideological policy, Zhao Ziyang said the work done over the last few

"God created the world in six days. I can destroy it in a second."

Cartoon by V. Arsenyev

months had served to counter the trend towards "bourgeois liberalization." Nevertheless, he said, there was still much to be done to eliminate its effect.

As for foreign policy, he noted that the current international situation was a complex one and that war was still likely. However, the preservation of world peace, he said, was now possible thanks to the growing peace movement. China, he added, would proceed with its independent foreign policy and seek national reunification. He noted the importance of the agreement reached between his government and that of Portugal over Aomen (Macao).

This tiny Portuguese colony with a population of around half a million Chinese and some 10,000 Portuguese on an area of 15.5 square kilometres will be handed over to the P.R.C. on December 20, 1999, two years after the British colony of Xianggang with its six-million-strong population is transferred to Chinese control. However, in accordance with the respective agreements, the capitalist system currently obtaining in these territories will continue for 50 years after they have been returned to China.

The session is to enact a law on peasant committees. In the process of the new agrarian reform initiated eight years ago, the people's communes that held the reins of both administrative and economic power were abolished, while the rural districts were restored and invested with administrative power. Peasant committees were set up as bodies of self-government, and their status is now to be legalized.

The present session, which opened on March 25, will close on April 16.

MIKHAIL YAKOVLEV

INDIA

Local elections of national importance

● ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES OF THREE INDIAN STATES WERE HELD ON MARCH 23.

These were the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir, the southern state of Kerala and the eastern state of West Bengal. The total number of voters in them runs to 60 million, more than the population of any West European country. Upwards of 3,000 candidates contested the 500-odd seats. However, the real importance of the elections lay in the fact that this was the first trial of strength between the ruling Indian National Congress (I) and the opposition since the general election held in 1984 after Indira Gandhi's assassination in which the INC (I) won a landslide. But in a number of states, which include the three in question, the INC (I) is either in opposition or dependent on the support of local parties.

In Jammu and Kashmir the alliance between the INC (I) and the local Muslim National Conference Party again won the elections and will form the new state government. Clerical-chauvinistic and other reactionary groups sustained disastrous losses. These results will clearly make for a more successful drive against secessionist elements both in this frontier state and in neighbouring Punjab.

In West Bengal, the INC (I) has long been in irreconcilable conflict wth the local Left Front government led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist). This government was returned for a third term with a two thirds majority in the legislative assembly.

In Kerala the INC (I) had headed a government coalition composed of several parties of local importance. However, at these elections the CPI (M)-led Left Democratic Front gained a confident majority and will now form the state cabinet. The INC (I)-led coalition failed because of an unenviable service record in which corruption, factional strife and parochial interests were dominant.

The INC (I) has thus lost the last South Indian state in which it had a majority. Overall, it is in opposition today in nine of the country's 24 states.

The Kerala failure could adversely affect the personal prestige of Rajiv Gandhi, who stage-managed the campaign for his party in all three states. His still unquestioned national authority could not cancel out local factors.

Yet these local election results do not necessarily reflect the national standing of the various parties. Recent years have shown that whenever national problems and foreign policy interests are at stake, electors more often than not vote for the INC (I) as the guarantor of the continuity of the Jawaharlal Nehru-Indira Gandhi line. Current events bear this out. By-elections to the national parliament returned all three INC (I) candidates with an indisputable majority. Regional passions did not obscure national priorities.

LEONID ZHEGALOV
our own correspondent
Delhi

PERSIAN GULF

False alarms

● ANOTHER ALARM HAS SOUNDED AT THE PENTAGON.

This time the excuse is Iran's alleged deployment of missile launchers along the shores of the Strait of Hormuz leading from the Arabian Sea to the Persian Gulf, which is seen as a potential threat to shipping. Though spokesmen for the U.S. administration admit that they have no precise information to this effect and are not even sure whether Iran has missile launchers, Washington officialdom has declared that the strait is again being menaced.

I repeat: no firm evidence exists, nor has it been established whether any Iranian missile launchers do indeed threaten the strait. Meanwhile, however, American long guns from a whole armada of 18 warships led by the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk, are bristling off the shores of the gulf. Unlike the first, this is a tangible, not hypothetical threat to shipping in the Persian Gulf and to the countries along its littoral.

The so-called "Iranian threat" is obviously no more than a pretext for the U.S. to interfere in developments in the region and seize control of the world's liveliest oil route. Washington made preparations for this provocation for a long time. As early as January former Defence Secretary James Schlesinger deplored the absence of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf area. He urged that the situation be remedied by dispatching two squadrons of dozens of warships and planes.

Schlesinger's recommendations could have been regarded as a mere militaristic itch had it not been for the administration's avowed readi-

ness to back up strategic interests in the Persian Gulf area. Allusions were made to "a certain power" that could presumably at any moment gain control of the oil wells there and even alter the political system of the Gulf states.

Nevertheless, Washington's intimidation of these states by alleging a threat from the north has neither panicked nor frightened them. On the contrary, judging from comments in the local media, these states consider it a false alarm, sounded to implement the sole long-standing objective of foisting U.S. military bases on the Arab states in the Persian Gulf. As the U.S. military are failing to get a foot in the door, they are trying to push their way in through the window. The Pentagon has stationed guards in the Strait of Hormuz, the gateway to the Persian Gulf.

Moreover, according to the New York Post, the U.S. is prepared to strike at Iran, ostensibly to "protect shipping" in the Persian Gulf. Quoting U.S. navy officials, it notes that Kitty Hawk is already on action lines, although only recently the Pentagon spokesman Robert Sims said, when asked by newsmen to comment on reports of the aircraft carrier's movement towards the Persian Gulf, that he did not know what its course was.

Though Mr Sims may have pulled the wool over some eyes, his deception has faded as swiftly as a mirage in the Arabian desert. Today there is no doubt that by sending its armada into the Persian Gulf, the White House has resorted to the tactic of destabilizing the situation in the region.

ALEXANDER KAPRALOV

CHILE

Chile Chico, 288

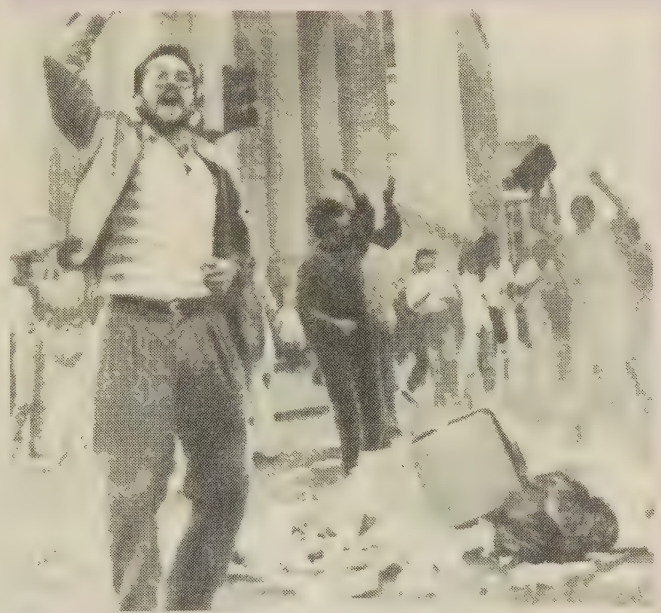
● ON MARCH 26 CLODOMIRO ALMEYDA, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CHILEAN SOCIALIST PARTY, WAS EXILED TO CHILE CHICO, AT THE SOUTHERNMOST POINT OF THE COUNTRY.

Throughout its history Chile Chico has never been bombarded with so many telephone calls as now. The small local exchange was barely able to cope with the endless, round-the-clock calls coming in not only from Santiago and other Chilean cities, but also from Buenos Aires, Madrid, Paris and Berlin.

After the 1973 army takeover Clodomiro Almeyda, who served as Foreign Minister in Salvador Allende's Popular Unity government, was arrested and interned in the concentration camp on the desolate island of Dawson in the southern Strait of Magellan, along with other ministers and political leaders including Communist Party General Secretary Luis Corvalan.

However, two years later world public pressure forced Pinochet to close the camp and release its prisoners, who were deported along with tens of thousands of Chileans. Many emigrated to save their lives, while others, the hundreds of thousands of victims of the economic crisis, left in search of a livelihood.

The Chilean Catholic Church has estimated that there are at least a million Chileans of an entire population of 11 million currently living in exile in various Latin American and European countries.



Demonstrators protesting against abuses of human rights in Chile.

France Presse—TASS photo

For many years these emigrants have been striving to have their right to live in Chile recognized, a demand that is meeting with widespread sympathy even in quarters close to the ruling junta. Pinochet has been obliged to make concessions, and in recent years many have returned home. However, there are still some 2,000 believed by the dictator to be "national security risks." Clodomiro Almeyda was one of these "dangerous" individuals.

After 12 years abroad he decided to return illegally. However, only a few hours after arriving he faced trial in a courtroom outside of which thousands of Chileans gathered to welcome this ardent patriot. The judge released him, and he was given permission to reside in Santiago. Even right-wing elements that did not oppose the dictatorship supported this ruling. However, Pinochet personally ordered the ex-minister's arrest and exile to Chile Chico for a 90-day period. There he will be under continual police surveillance, and obliged to report to the carabiniers twice a day.

Telephone number 288 in Chile Chico rings endlessly. Last week even Moscow was on the line, an unprecedented event. From the Soviet capital I was able to talk with this man, today a symbol of staunchness and courage. Though the connection was poor, short and interrupted, I heard Clodomiro Almeyda say: "I would like to say how happy I am to be back in my native land of Chile. Although the regime has exiled me to Chile Chico, I rejoice at being once again with my people in my own country after 12 years of enforced exile." Almeyda thanked all who inside and outside Chile had expressed solidarity with him. He said he was sure that eventually the Chilean people's courageous struggle would end in the restoration of democracy.

More than 400 Chilean political prisoners have begun fasting. Almeyda's return home in defiance of Pinochet's ban has infused Chilean patriots with renewed strength and energy in their struggle against the fascist dictatorship.

JOSE MIGUEL VARAS
Chilean journalist

Disturbed beehive

or NATO debates on "star wars," the non-nuclear prospect and conventional armaments

"The Atlantic alliance is buzzing like a disturbed beehive," is how one Western newsman recently described the situation prevailing at present at NATO headquarters. The "buzzing" has been going on for several months now. At first, as a reaction to Reykjavik and the idea of the total elimination of nuclear weapons discussed there. Later—to the U.S. administration's repudiation of SALT-2. Heated debates erupted over the reduction of conventional arms. Passions on these issues subsided for a while only to break out afresh, this time over Washington's plans to deploy the first echelon of SDI and to tailor the ABM Treaty accordingly. Moscow met the West halfway by announcing its readiness to examine the Eurostrategic problem as a separate issue.

"Star wars"

The United States' attempts to clear the way to outer space for armaments have caused some anxiety in Western Europe. It is feared here, the weekly NATO Report observed, that assault on the ABM Treaty and early development of SDI "would undermine both the pact itself and efforts to negotiate new agreements." According to press reports, F.R.G. Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, his Belgian counterpart Léo Tindemans and others warned Washington that SDI research must not go beyond the bounds set by the ABM Treaty in its original interpretation. Critical comment came also from Amsterdam, London, Rome and other capitals.

Initial overseas attempts to rebuke the "panicky" partners and brush aside their objections failed to remove the tension. NATO Secretary-General Lord Carrington again urged Washington not to take any decisions without consulting its allies.

The NATO countries not infrequently differ on one or another question. But their debates end as a rule in support for the U.S. position. Washington is accustomed to this. Why, then, should the junior partners be surprised by the angry reaction to their criticism? The more so since their own position on SDI has been both inconsistent and contradictory.

It will be recalled that the first reaction of the West European leaders to the U.S. "star wars" plans was negative. Then began the retreat. Britain, the F.R.G. and Italy joined in SDI officially, and a number of other countries, France, for instance, said they had no objections to the participation of national firms in the scheme.

What course will the West Europeans follow now? Considering the mood in the U.S. Congress, a firm stand taken by the allies and refusal to participate in the militarization of outer space would impede the realization of the "star wars" plans. Washington, however, by all indications, considers this unlikely, believing that after making a bit of a fuss the partners will calm down. In the interests of Atlantic solidarity. That has happened more than once before this.

Take SALT-2, for example. At the spring 1986 session of the NATO Council, the U.S. intention to overstep the limitations laid down in that treaty sparked off a debate that was anything but pleasant for Washington. Six months later, at the winter session of the alliance, held some two weeks after the U.S. had violated the SALT-2 ceilings, this question was relegated to the background. And after a series of American "explanations" and "consultations," some West European leaders shifted the emphasis to talk about the need for observance of SALT-2 provisions by both sides. Some went so far as to accuse the U.S.S.R. of the violations Washington ascribed to it, despite the patent absurdity of such accusations.

At the end of February, White House emissaries Paul Nitze and Richard Perle visited NATO headquarters in the course of their West European tour. Washington finally decided to observe the proprieties and "consult" with its partners. As it had done in the case of the SALT-2 treaty. However, the consultations did not basically alter the American position. Washington merely moderated its tone.

Caspar Weinberger, left, and Lord Carrington: What are the Pentagon chief and the NATO Secretary-General thinking about? What will they offer in response to Moscow's bids other than an empty hand?

From NATO Review (Belgium)

The non-nuclear prospect

Reykjavik, too, gave the Atlantic "family" a bad headache. The prospect of a non-nuclear world was met with hostility not only by the supreme commander of the NATO forces in Europe. It was not to the taste of many politicians as well. As a result, the West retreated from the frontiers reached in the Icelandic capital. Its leaders, both in the U.S. and in Western Europe, made it plain that they were not ready to do away with nuclear weapons by the end of the century. The North Atlantic al-

liance gives "priority" to a 50 per cent reduction in the strategic arsenals of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.

There are several reasons for the reluctance to rid the planet of nuclear weaponry. NATO experts eulogize the nuclear weapon on the grounds that "both East and West owe the four decades of peace" to it.

They consider unrealistic also the elimination of European nuclear armouries. NATO's own creation, the "zero option," is likewise rejected. Why? The abolition of Soviet and American missiles, they aver, would put the West at a disadvantage because it would have nothing to offset the "overwhelming superiority" of the U.S.S.R. in missiles with a range of under 1,000 kilometres, and the no less "threatening imbalance" in conventional weapons. Besides, the withdrawal of the U.S. Euromissiles would lead to the uncoupling of the military potentials of the U.S. and Western Europe, which supposedly would leave the Old World all but defenceless.

For their part, the NATO politicians on the face of it are not against the abolition of Soviet and American Euromissiles. At any rate most of them welcomed Mikhail Gorbachev's statement about the readiness of the U.S.S.R. to resolve this problem as a separate issue and within a brief space of time. Nevertheless, their approval of ridding the European house of the nuclear incubus is hedged in with the same old reservations and linkages. Hence it is difficult to distinguish between the approval and disapproval of the NATO experts.

Addressing parliament in mid-February, the Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou called such arguments groundless. And so they are. Take if only the problem of missiles with a range of less than 1,000 kilometres. In Reykjavik the U.S.S.R. proposed freezing the number of these weapons immediately after the liquidation of the Euromissiles, and beginning talks on what to do with them. Mikhail Gorbachev's statement of February 28 was another step towards meeting the wishes of the West. As soon as the agreement on the abolition of Soviet and American medium-range missiles in Europe is signed, the statement said, the U.S.S.R. will withdraw its longer-range tactical missiles from the G.D.R. and Czechoslovakia. As regards the other nuclear missiles, the Soviet Union is ready to begin negotiations at once with a view to their reduction and total elimination. The point would appear to be perfectly clear. Yet the NATO camp continues to confuse the issue.

The British last century politician Benjamin Disraeli once remarked, "there are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics." The contention regarding the overwhelming superiority of the Warsaw Treaty countries in conventional weapons belongs to the third of these categories. If all the factors are taken into account—both the quantitative and the qualitative aspects of conventional weapons—and if the military capabilities of France and Spain are not "forgotten," the forces of the sides will be seen to be approximately equal. Last year U.S. Secretary of State Shultz, for instance, declared that when it was said that in a non-nuclear world America would be outstripped in general-purpose forces, he simply did not believe it. Similar sentiments were expressed more recently by Senator Clairborne Pell, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And the prestigious Brookings Institution concludes that the correlation of the conventional forces of the Warsaw Treaty countries and NATO is not only close to parity but even in favour of the West.

The question of the "uncoupling" of the military potentials of the U.S. and Western Europe was raised at a press conference during the winter session of the NATO Council. Replying, Lord Carrington said "that he had no fear and that the presence of more than 300,000 American soldiers in Europe was very coupling."

Not venturing to come out openly against so popular an idea as that of abolishing the Euromissiles, many are trying to block it indirectly. They have latterly been harping on the problem of verification. Reports have appeared in the Western press that the U.S. intends to propose to the U.S.S.R. obviously inacceptable measures for verifying the observance of the agreement on Euromissiles. But diplomatic ruses of this kind tend to boomerang. Excessive control does not evoke particular enthusiasm on the part of many of the United States' allies. Realizing that agreement can be reached only on the basis of reciprocity, the West Europeans, the Nouvelles Atlantiques says, "might have difficulty in accepting on-site inspections by Soviet teams." Speaking of the position of its Prime Minister, Le Soir notes that "M. Martens is not happy about the prospect of control and verification by Soviet officers on Belgian territory." This, the paper said, would moreover run counter to Belgian laws under which Belgium is open only to NATO servicemen.

Conventional armaments

At their December meeting the NATO foreign ministers adopted the Brussels Declaration on Conventional Arms Control. They agreed in principle to proposals advanced by the U.S.S.R. and its allies to begin discussing the problem of conventional arms on the territory of Europe—from the Atlantic to the Urals. The Brussels Declaration was drafted in heated debate that went on for six months. However, the Atlantic mountain gave birth to a mouse. Especially as compared with the Budapest Appeal of the Warsaw Treaty States adopted in June 1986.

The socialist countries advanced a programme for the radical reduction of armed forces and armaments in Europe. For one thing, they proposed reducing the overall strength of the opposing military lineups by more than a million men. The Brussels Declaration, on the other hand, apart from assurances of readiness to talk about talks (the exchange of opinions on this question began on February 17 in Vienna) and repetition of the old tenets of the Western side, contains nothing.

The Western position has become no more concrete nor constructive since then. At the Vienna meeting of the participants in the Helsinki conference, the French and U.S. delegates, Pierre-Henri Renard and Warren Zimmerman, spoke of the future negotiations as a forum devoted not to securing the radical reduction of armed forces and conventional arms but to "conventional stability." Commenting on this verbal exercise, the weekly NATO Report observes: "Some NATO countries are unwilling to reduce their own defensive capability in return for Warsaw Pact reductions."

Attempts are being made to sow doubts as to the need for radical reductions in European non-nuclear capabilities. A case in point is the speech to reservists delivered in February by Stephen Ledogar, acting U.S. permanent representative to NATO. The U.S.S.R., he said, wants to use the negotiations on conventional arms to strike a wedge between the United States and its European partners. To all intents and purposes, this U.S. spokesman demanded the unilateral disarmament of the U.S.S.R. "Given the objective military situation in Europe," he said, "force reductions will have to come preponderantly from Soviet forces." A similar view was voiced recently by the F.R.G. Defence Minister Manfred Wörner. Since the Warsaw Treaty countries have "enormous advantage" in the number of forces and conventional weapons, he said, they should make the greater effort. NATO will not accept equal or slightly asymmetrical reductions, he stressed.

The truth is born in debate, the saying goes. Will the present NATO debates bear this out?

It is high time the NATO strategists grasped one irrefutable truth, a truth dictated by the realities of this nuclear and space age. Namely—security today can only be equal and universal; military superiority can only create the temporary illusion of such security. In practice it leads to destabilization.

VYACHESLAV BOIKOV

Brussels

Leave the stars to the lovers

Drawing by Stasys Krasauskas

ADOLFO PEREZ ESQUIVEL
Nobel Prize winner

I am often asked about the future and how I see it, invited to fantasize, as it were. Actually, you do not need to fantasize. Indices of the future are in evidence now. The shape of things to come depends on what we do today. So, I prefer to speak about the present.

I have recently returned from a long foreign tour. I had many meetings some of which left an indelible impression on me. In Athens, I talked with a Japanese woman who had survived the nuclear blast in Hiroshima. She told me that the atomic blast had destroyed her life, made it impossible for her to communicate normally with other people, have family and children. The bomb had deprived her of the right to love.

I think this woman expressed the essence of the situation that is taking shape in the world. Her fate will be our fate if there is a nuclear holocaust. Her life is a personal expression of the irrationality and senselessness of the dangerous game powerful international forces are playing with the nuclear fire, and shows where this game can lead.

Adolfo Perez Esquivel is a prominent Argentine sculptor and architect. He is well known as a champion of peace and human rights and was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1980. He is head of the Latin American Peace and Justice Service organization. In the late seventies, when the military seized power in Argentina, he spent 14 months in a junta prison, followed by a long period under house arrest.

When the Gorbachev-Reagan meeting in Reykjavik failed because of the U.S. President's refusal to abandon his "star wars" programme, I recalled a peace demonstration in Milan. Seventy thousand young Italians converged on a vast square. They were marching and chanting a song written specially for the occasion. The song had the words: "Reagan, leave the stars to the lovers." The young Italians were not singing of a lovelorn couple on a starry night, but of all who love life, including the Japanese woman whom the atomic bomb had deprived of love. When they sang "Reagan, leave the stars to the lovers," they seemed to be saying, "Preserve people's lives. Don't take love away from them." Italians in Milan were the same age as the Japanese woman at the time of the Hiroshima bombing. So, from the present we can see a possible near future by recreating an appalling episode of the past.

The future may be like this unless we act resolutely now, today.

But I want to draw attention to something else, to silent catastrophe which is claiming more lives than any Hiroshima bombs. That catastrophe is poverty and hunger and it confronts tens of millions of Latin Americans every day. I travel a great deal about Latin America and I know how people live. In the Indian communities people work from dawn till dusk—15-18 hours a day. And yet they cannot achieve a decent standard of living.

The people I talked with in Europe named the menace of nuclear war as their chief anxiety. They have grounds for feeling as they do, for they live in a forest of nuclear missiles. These missiles threaten human life on earth.

In Latin America other cares take precedence. Our peoples are being pushed increasingly to below the poverty line. The very survival of entire nations is in the balance. It is no accident that in Argentina, one of the continent's richest countries, 6.5 million people are undernourished. This is the result of a deliberate plan to subjugate Latin American countries to imperialism.

In Argentina, the military dictatorship tried hard to do just this. Following the recommendations of the Chicago school of economics led by Milton Friedman, it adopted an economic model that suited only foreign monopolists and powerful local capitalists. The recommendations were implemented by the Argentine Economics Minister José Alfredo Martinez de Hoz, a stooge of the international banks. It was not simply because four or five demented generals were in power that grave crimes and brazen violations of human rights took place in Argentina. Terror was needed to defeat the workers' movement, disband mass organizations, degrade the country's intellectual potential, and facilitate a definite economic policy. The "process of national rehabilitation" started by the military threw Argentina back 40 years. Production slumped and social conflicts became more acute. To bolster their position, the military started the Malvinas war. However, the United States, which likes to cite the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, refused to help Argentina and took the side of its NATO ally, Great Britain.

We are witnessing the failure of the "doctrine of national security" foisted on the Latin American armed forces by

their Pentagon advisers, a doctrine that explains all conflicts worldwide in terms of the confrontation between East and West, the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. It is being drummed into our heads that our greatest enemy is the Soviet Union. In fact, it is the United States that is trying to oppress and subjugate our countries.

Last year I was invited by the U.N. Secretary-General to take part in the nongovernmental commission on the problem of South Africa, Namibia and the role of transnational corporations in the region. We met all the parties concerned, from the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) to the Association of Chambers of Commerce of South Africa. We had a meeting with representatives of the International Monetary Fund. The information I obtained made me take a different view of what is happening in southern Africa. I realized that the transnational corporations have long been more powerful than governments and are ignoring the interests of the peoples. It is not hard to see why the apartheid regime in South Africa persists. The transnational corporations there are backing the regime. These corporations have American, British, West German capital, not least because South Africa is a major gold producer.

I have come to the conclusion that the developing countries should pay more attention to their relations with each other: Latin America and Africa, Africa and Asia. This will help them understand their own problems. For they have many problems in common. What happened in the Philippines, for example, is similar to what happened in Argentina.

Argentina is a member of the Delhi Six, which is doing some useful international work. I have backed their peaceful initiatives. Such expressions of good intentions are necessary. And yet I can't help feeling that the world is tired of mere declarations. Concrete action is needed to change the situation.

The importance of a moral influence on the course of events, emphasized by the leaders of the Six, including President Raul Alfonsin of Argentina, is not open to doubt. But to my mind moral influence alone is not enough. That is why I disagree with many points in President Alfonsin's policy. For instance, he makes too many declarations and takes too few concrete steps to put them into practice. With regard to the foreign debts of Latin American countries, why can't he agree with other Latin American states on joint actions and a common stand vis-à-vis their creditors? Why do we follow the lead of the IMF and negotiate with banks separately? And yet solving the problem of foreign debts would help us find a way out of the grave economic situation we are in today. Perhaps by acting together we can cease to be the beggars of the Western Hemisphere and achieve a more dignified position.

In Argentina, which cannot feed its hungry, the money that could improve its medical services, promote industry and agriculture and create new jobs, money earned by the nation and borrowed from abroad, goes effectively to service old debts; not to defray the initial debts, but to pay interest on them. And yet we know that 60 per cent of these debts are the result of illegal financial operations and currency speculation. The country has vast numbers of children lacking proper care, while the International Monetary Fund says it is pleased with the way Argentina is paying interest on its credits.

Take arms spending. The developing countries buy about 70 per cent of the conventional weapons manufactured worldwide. Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay spend a great deal on arms. This diverts resources from their social and economic development.

I feel I must mention the inconsistent policy of Argentina and Brazil on nuclear issues. They have yet to put into effect the Tlatelolco Treaty on the non-nuclear status of Latin America. True, Brazil has come up with an important proposal to declare the South Atlantic a zone of peace. An excellent proposal. It would be still better if it were backed by concrete action.

During my recent visit to Bolivia I went to the Siglo XX, the biggest tin mines in the world, in Catavi. My guides were Domitila Chungala, a woman miner, and some miners' wives. We went down the mine shaft and talked to miners about the hunger strike they were holding at the time. The strike was not called to press for better working conditions or higher pay. They were striking against the handover of public enterprises to the transnational corporations. It is not easy to go on a hunger strike when people around you are stricken by hunger. And yet they fasted. The problem is that the IMF, by sticking to its way of exacting the payment of interest on debts, is trying to bring about a situation where Latin American government enterprises are sold to the transnational corporations. That would be another blow at national independence, with debt repayment becoming a tool to produce a new system of bondage.

I would like to go back to the problem of peace and eliminating the nuclear danger with which we began our conversation. Just as you can see signs of the future in the present, so our present is reflected in the past. Whatever people may say about the efforts made to prevent the second world war, the fact remains that not enough was done. What is happening now? The Soviet Union came out with a splendid and heartening initiative. It unilaterally suspended nuclear tests and extended its moratorium five times, refraining from tests for more than 18 months. But the U.S. did not follow its example, although it is clear that a further impovement and stockpiling of nuclear weapons increases the risk of war and the threat to peace. No state can any longer ensure its security with the help of arms.

The position of France, which is continuing its nuclear tests on a Pacific atoll, is hardly conducive to a relaxation of tension. I have mentioned the arms trade. The biggest arms manufacturers are the United States and the Soviet Union. This is a fact. But one should not forget about others, those, for example, who are supplying arms to South Africa contrary to U.N. resolutions.

During my talk with Labour MPs in London, I was told that the British fleet involved in the Malvinas war had nuclear weapons on board, and that the British Admiralty had considered the option of delivering nuclear strikes on Argentine ports should events took an unfavourable turn.

What, then, is the way out? To my mind there is only one way out: thinking people, intellectuals must build up public opinion by explaining the problems of nuclear war and the silent catastrophes of poverty and hunger. They must make their voices heard not only in the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., but in other countries as well.

Ten or twelve years ago a movement aimed at bringing the peoples of our countries closer together, and involving not governments but the public, arose in Latin America. The peoples are gradually drawing closer together to tackle the common problems that face them. That is a very promising sign as is highlighted by solidarity with Nicaragua. ■

New old priorities

What will the ruling coalition's policy be like in the next four years?

Nobody doubted that CSU Chairman Helmut Kohl would be reelected Chancellor of the F.R.G. for a third term. After all, the three parties making up the government coalition—the CDU, the CSU and the Free Democratic Party—reign supreme in the Bundestag. But after Bundestag Chairman Philipp Jenninger had read out the results of the secret ballot, a tense silence fell in the hall. There was nothing to applaud. Kohl had won a slender majority of four. At least 15 coalition MPs had either voted against their own candidate, or abstained.

Kohl's just scraping through was no accident. Local observers are unanimous in that the vote reflected a decline of his authority in his own party. The CDU, of which he is leader, sustained the heaviest losses in the January 25 parliamentary elections, with nearly two million electors taking their votes elsewhere. If this trend persists—and this year elections to five regional parliaments are to be held—Kohl's continuance in office will become problematic.

The election of the Chancellor was preceded by five weeks of intra-coalition talks. The partners turned out to be divided on many issues, and the talks made slow progress. Taking advantage of the weakening of the CDU's position, CSU and FrDP leaders stubbornly held their own. The parties failed to reach a compromise on many issues.

No decisions were adopted with regard to the F.R.G.'s foreign policy. Judging from their public statements, CSU leader Franz-Josef Strauss and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher (FrDP) have few points in common.

The Chancellor has the dominant position in the government. Under the Constitution, he decides on the foreign and home policy of the state. In the past Kohl has repeatedly been criticized for the occasionally incompetent use of his powers, tolerating divergence in cabinet opinion, and the practice he has made of "sitting it out" instead of making decisions. Will the Chancellor lay down a clear-cut policy this time for his government to follow over the next four years? The answer to this question was to have been furnished by the Chancellor's government statement in Bundestag on March 18.

Dortmund steelworkers demand job security.

TASS photo

Carry on!

At 11 a.m., as Kohl was reading the government statement, church bells rang out in the Ruhr cities of Hattingen and Oberhausen. They called people not to prayer, but to a protest demonstration against the closure of the Thyssen steel plants in those cities. School classes stopped, shops were closed, and municipal transport ceased to function. If metalworkers lose their jobs, so will sales assistants, hairdressers, truck drivers and waiters. That was why almost the entire adult population of the two cities took to the streets: 30,000 in Hattingen and over 35,000 in Oberhausen.

Thyssen is not the only steel concern to close down its plants—others are curtailing production, too. As many as 33,000 jobs are to be killed over the next two years.

In his statement the Chancellor could not pass over the crisis in the metallurgical industry in silence. What he said, however, was cold comfort to the residents of Hattingen, Oberhausen and other cities in the Ruhr. The F.R.G. government, he informed the Bundestag, would press the EEC for the adoption of plans, binding on all, to "cut down on excessive production" and set a steel output quota for each country. In other words, dismissals will continue not only in the F.R.G. but in all the Common Market countries, and according to a predetermined plan. So the outlook for F.R.G. steelworkers is anything but bright.

Kohl spoke for two and a half hours. In that time he expatiated on the importance of choral societies and sports clubs, love of children and the need for shops to work longer hours once a week (the F.R.G. is the only West European country where all shops close as early as 6.30 in the evening). But when it came to the really serious social problems—the plight of peasant households, which are being ruined by the thousand, and old age pensioners; the rising cost of the medical service; the crisis in the shipbuilding, coal-mining and steel industries—he just talked his way out of them. As Hans-Jochen Vogel, chairman of the SDPG faction in the Bundestag, aptly put it, Kohl's speech was "a verbose collection of generalities and innumerable arbitrarily selected details."

Nevertheless, Kohl formulated the main trend of his cabinet's future home policy clearly enough: "We firmly adhere to the principles of the social market economy." In his own words, the market supposedly guarantees equal opportunities, prosperity and social progress. It is only the market economy that offers the key to a reduction in unemployment, a cardinal objective of government policy. Kohl had spoken in the same vein in the autumn of 1982, when he first took office. Since then, unemployment has grown to 2.5 million (official statistics). But whereas in 1982 the F.R.G. economy was at the lowest point of a cyclical slump, today it is still on the upsurge, although the peak is already past, and indications

that another recession is on the way are increasingly in evidence. The development of even such advanced and fast-growing industries as electrical engineering and electronics has slowed down sharply. Electrical and electronics company owners have said they will take on no more workers in 1987.

Consequently, the chances of the "wonder-working" market forces reducing unemployment are nil. As for measures suggested by the trade unions, such as a shorter working week, the Chancellor did not even mention them.

The coalition parties regard the tax reform agreement as their biggest achievement. The structure of the reform is rather complex. It does not consist solely in reducing taxes levied on high profits. The government statement stressed that the reform would make life easier for those in the lower-income brackets as well. This is true. On the other hand, a business proprietor making 300,000 DM a year will gain 25 times more from the reform than an ordinary factory or office worker.

Having agreed on the reform, the coalition leaders deliberately postponed discussing the matter of where the money is to come from. After all, the reform will leave the public purse short by tens of billions of marks, which must somehow be reimbursed. There are not many ways of offsetting this shortfall. One, however, is to raise indirect taxes—which will as likely as not be done. In other words, whatever benefits the working people derive from the reform are going to be cancelled out by a rise in the price of consumer goods.

The CDU conducted its election campaign under the slogan: "Carry On, Germany!" Now this slogan is being put into effect. Since 1982 the proportion of wage earners (the overwhelming majority of the population) in the national income has shrunk from 66 to 58 per cent. The proportion of business owners has correspondingly increased. To "carry on" means continuing to deepen social inequality.

Want of new thinking

The preamble to the government statement affects to be a philosophical treatment of the contradictions of the modern world. Kohl talked about scientific and technological progress being of both benefit and danger to mankind. Among the dangers threatening humanity the Chancellor did not mention the most terrible of all which is, unfortunately, very real: that of nuclear self-destruction. This was not a sin of omission on the speech writers' part. Herr Kohl, a Christian, regards nuclear weapons as quite "acceptable."

Having proceeded from abstract philosophizing to the tasks facing NATO, the Chancellor said it had first and foremost to retain its defence capacity—i.e., to keep its nuclear weapons. According to Kohl, there will be no alternative to the strategy of deterrence in the foreseeable future. He does not seem to take an option like nuclear disarmament seriously.

Foreign Minister Genscher has recently repeatedly urged the West to give a joint political answer to what General Secretary Gorbachev calls "new thinking." Judging from the F.R.G. government's statement, however, Bonn is not yet ready to provide such an answer.

The CDU/CSU are still thinking in the categories of the past, and cannot tolerate the existence of a sovereign socialist state on German soil. Kohl repeated that "the German question remained open legally, politically and historically," and that it was Bonn's "duty" to speak for "all Germans." The coalition's stand on the problem of F.R.G.-G.D.R. relations is amazingly contradictory. While professing a positive intention to promote these relations, it is adhering to shopworn revanchist postulates which, however often repeated, have no future, as the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (G.D.R.) newspaper Neues Deutschland wrote in this connection.

Alfred Dregger, chairman of the CDU/CSU faction in the Bundestag, went even further: he came up with a long-term scheme for "reuniting Europe." In such a Europe there would, of course, be no room for socialism.

Significantly, it was Dreggers' speech rather than the government statement that the newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine, a mouthpiece of the conservatives, regarded as a synopsis of Bonn's foreign policy "concept." The paper had special praise for the leader of the right in the Bundestag for having "pointed to the risk of an isolated zero option" on intermediate-range missiles in Europe. "Europeans," the paper says, meaning Britain, France and the F.R.G. in particular, "must together make it perfectly clear to Washington that they reject the isolated zero option on intermediate-range missiles as mechanical (?), dangerous and wrong."

Why? Didn't Kohl announce for all to hear that "the F.R.G. is especially interested" in an early agreement on the elimination of Soviet and American intermediate-range missiles as part of the Reykjavik formula? The right probably believe that Bonn will make the "zero option" conditional on other issues, or try to sidestep it in some other way.

Such hopes are based on the Chancellor's assertions about the Soviet Union's allegedly "overwhelming superiority" in short-range missiles, and his demand for "equal ceilings" for this class of weapon.

"Aren't you or NATO preparing for a new 'rearmament'?" Waltraud Schoppe of the Green Party asked the Chancellor with justice. Versions of such a "rearmament" are already under discussion. One of these provides for equipping warplanes with cruise missiles, and the other—for converting Pershing 2 missiles into short-range Pershing 1s. This can be done by removing one stage of the missile, which can easily be refitted later. No government spokesman has disowned such plans.

While giving verbal support to another understanding reached in Reykjavik—on the need to reduce offensive strategic weapons to half—Kohl made no mention of the obstacles in the way of this objective, to wit, U.S. plans for the militarization of outer space and Washington's stubborn reluctance to observe the ABM Treaty. Such contradictions abound in the government statement.

Also meriting attention is the total absence of any disarmament proposals of the F.R.G., although Bonn could help the Geneva talks along by stopping the deployment of American intermediate-range missiles on its territory in compliance with the demands of the peace movement. Neither does the government statement furnish an answer to the proposals worked out jointly by the SUPG and the West German Social Democrats for the establishment of a chemical weapon-free zone and a non-nuclear corridor in Europe.

Political observers expected the Chancellor to take this opportunity to give the go-ahead for the improvement of relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. These relations have markedly deteriorated today—largely through Kohl's own fault. The Chancellor did indeed voice his readiness to promote relations with his country's eastern neighbours in all spheres and at all levels, on the basis of the bilateral agreements already signed and the Helsinki Final Act. He stressed that relations with the U.S.S.R. are of crucial importance to the F.R.G. The Chancellor expressed the desire to promote Soviet-F.R.G. political dialogue and expand economic links and cooperation in the scientific, technical, cultural, humanitarian and other spheres.

Just how sincere these statements are, the near future will tell. But let us not forget that the security issue is central to U.S.S.R.-F.R.G. relations and that this is the very issue on which the Chancellor had virtually nothing new to say.

ALEXANDER TOLPEGIN
our own correspondent

Bonn

It's time we got fundamental results from fundamental science

Reflecting on the problems associated with the development of Siberia, Academician EVGENY SHEMYAKIN, director of the Institute of Mining of the Siberian branch of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, confined himself to his institute's projects. But there was nothing narrow-minded about this, as mining has an appreciable role to play in carrying out the comprehensive economic programme called Siberia, and the results of research in mining are used in and outside the country.

Overall, the institute conducts research in three spheres: rock mechanics, mining and building machine science, and the theory of open-cast and underground mining. The standard of its research investigations can be judged from the following fact: the Institute of Mining has created, in conjunction with the Geology and Geophysics Institute of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, an installation for the vibro-inspection of earth. Over the last few years the institute has taken out nearly 600 patents and 1,200 inventor's certificates, and sold six licences to the U.S. and the F.R.G., while requests for new design ideas pour in to it from all corners of the country. The institute leads the Siberian Branch in the number of patents and inventions, and outside Siberia it certainly ranks with, for instance, Kiev's Paton Electric Welding Institute, whose inventions are promptly put into industrial practice.

Hammers, pneumatic punches, rammers, concrete breakers, single-stroke machines, pneumatic drills, vibrators—all these are practical results of the IM's fundamental research efforts. The institute maintains extensive links with various industries. It is familiar with the requirements of production, and responds to them. But. . . .

Who needs a pneumatic pick?

"The 27th CPSU Congress," I reminded Academician Shemyakin, "heard an extremely bitter speech from Konstantin Petrov, an ex-miner and Party veteran. He said our coal-miners still used the inefficient and high-vibration pneumatic picks of the kind the famous Stakhanov wielded 50 years ago. And this in spite of the fact, the veteran said, that your institute has developed a pick that has reduced vibration to half and increased work efficiency by 20-30 per cent. Where is it? Some time has now passed since the congress. Are there any changes for the better? When will our coal-miners get the new low-vibration pick?"

"In all fairness, this question ought to be answered by industry, not by an academic institution," said Evgeny Shemyakin. "There is no positive answer so far, nor is one forthcoming without our assistance. The low-vibration pick has indeed been developed, and has passed all sorts of rigorous tests in the Donbas, the Kuzbas and other coal-mining regions. Nevertheless, it still needs improvement, and scientists at several laboratories are now busy getting it into final shape under the direction of doctor of technical sciences Nikolai Klushin."

"So there is some hope for coal-miners, after all?"

"Well, we shall cope with this problem, of course," Academician Shemyakin assured me. "But in the course of tackling it, we come up against other problems characteristically involved in putting new inventions into practice in Siberia. Let us ask ourselves a question: what are the sources of our region's rapid growth? The obvious answer is advanced ideas and the latest in technology. Our population hasn't increased, Siberian winters are as cold as ever, and extreme conditions remain. What we want is not merely the token increase in economic efficiency we can get from replacing bad machines with mediocre ones; we need an efficiency of an order of magnitude higher than what we have now.

"If a solution offered by fundamental science yields no dramatic improvement, then why bother at all? What the Party is insisting on is superior quality. However, we face problems here. Klushin and I have just got back from Tomsk. A very representative conference discussed the problems associated with the production of picks there. Two sharply contrasting approaches to the problem came out in bold relief at the conference. Unfortunately, they have until now been typical of our engineering and certain other industries.

"The first boils down to the following: you can modify the old pick and to some extent modernize it. The trouble is that such a modification will leave vibration and non-adaptability to streamlined manufacture unchanged, and will not make things any easier for the miners. That is to say, it will only look new, and spare the designers extra effort.

"The other approach consists in what science offers. We are developing a pick of an entirely new generation. But no sooner do we come up with a new idea than industry counters it with any number of questions: what about reliability, design imperfections and production problems? Too many people think they can make progress without lifting a finger. In Tomsk, we told workers: 'Let us see how great the problems really are, and whether they are surmountable.' 'We can beat the problems,' they replied, 'but why should

we help adapt your pick to the required specifications? And can you give us a complete set of blueprints?' "

Academician Shemyakin smiled.

"As it happens, we can. We have long made it a principle at our institute to draw up a full set of blueprints—of all production forms and records, in fact —for every new machine, production process and device. So they needn't worry about that. I think we ought to pool our efforts rather than divide them, and to regard all problems as common rather than 'ours' and 'theirs'. There are, in fact, only two problems facing all of us: to give new ideas their due, and to clear the way for them."

"Cannot we simply import new picks?"

"There are no good picks in the West, you see. Firstly, foreign companies have still to find optimum designs. Secondly, social conditions do not compel them to. A miner suffers from vibration? Who cares. He may quit, but there are lots of others waiting to take his job."

"Are they really as cynical as that?"

"They are. I had a talk with a Krupp official recently, and asked him about the characteristics of the picks they used, particularly the vibration level. 'That doesn't make much difference to me,' he said. Well, it does to us. Our attitude to the workingman is different. The Soviet man's health is a concern of the state. This is why scientists at our institute have been attacking vibration on a wide front for years. The attack is spearheaded by Klushin, with about 30 foreign patents to his credit.

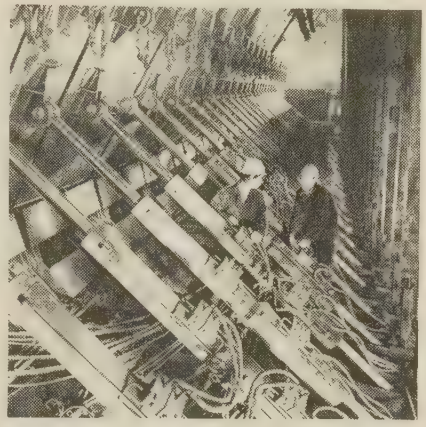
"Where did the Klushin pneumatic drill, now selling like hot cakes, come from? From his frustration at seeing hundreds of ugly holes being made with pneumatic picks, or sledge hammers and crowbars as the case may be, in house walls during construction or repairs. Klushin made the ordinary power nut driver rotate a pneumatic pick. The result was a pneumatic drill suitable for making holes in concrete and bricks. It was as simple as that. I have no doubt that a highly efficient pick is coming soon."

Two billion rubles haven't been saved

Knowing Klushin, his career and his potential, one can't help thinking: isn't he dissipating his efforts? After all, he is an academic. "Why should he deal with technical problems?" I put this question to Shemyakin.

"We certainly waste a lot of our time. But if we were not persistent and responsive, if we stood aloof from production, much would never have got past the design stage. Here's just one example. Record-high work efficiency has been achieved at the Tashtagol and Sheregesh ore mines. This would have been impossible without all sorts of innovations being used.

"We are interested in cooperating with Swedish experts and learning from them. Our Swedish guests thought they would just be taking a pleasure trip to exotic Siberia. But when we took them to our ore mines, the Swedes were amazed to find such a high standard of technology there. They liked the drills we had developed, particularly our low-vibration drills. The semi-automatic drills the institute's scientists won a Lenin Prize for twenty years ago are still in



An all-purpose stand devised by Novosibirsk scientists for testing mechanized coal-mining complexes.

TASS photo

reliable service. This is an example of how science helps industry advance 20-30 years at a bound. Such semi-automatic drills had no parallels elsewhere in the world. And now the Swedes have taken the course we embarked on long ago.

"And another thing. Latterly some people here have tended to seek new ideas abroad, ignoring those generated at home. For instance, our idea of the so-called 'immersed' pneumatic drills has made it possible to sink deep holes. The Swedes arrived at this idea twenty years later."

"Is this Siberian high technology spreading fast enough across the Soviet Union?"

"Not all that fast, unfortunately. Siberia is now ahead even of such an ore producer as Krivoi Rog. Why don't they draw on our experience? All sorts of excuses are made, such as our Siberian ore being of a different kind. We went over there to exchange experience and equipment. We showed them how we work. It looked as if things had got started. Did the situation change? Not at all. They still work in the old way in Krivoi Rog, wasting tens of millions of rubles. Theoretically, the ministry must be compelled to go over to the new technology. But who is going to make it do so? The restructuring of the economic mechanism encounters great difficulties."

"We have started to discuss the economy from a scientist's viewpoint. Could you cite a few examples of new scientific ideas saving Siberia's resources and helping make the most of them?"

"I can give you several good examples, but let me do so a little later. I shall start with a bad example, useful in its own way. Our Siberian branch of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences periodically circulates thematic reports on its new research projects to a number of factories and organizations. If all the ideas found in the first such report had been put to commercial use, as if by magic, in industry and agriculture, they would have effected the country a saving of about two billion rubles. And mind you, this is an under- rather than an over-statement. I am not saying that all our ideas have been lost on the national economy. But two billion rubles have not been saved. The Siberian branch produces about 150,000 rubles worth of machines for the builders of Siberia, especially Novosibirsk. This doesn't seem much at a first glance. But these machines are manufactured by the institute's modest workshops and our pilot plant, which is inundated with orders. Each machine increases work efficiency five- or even tenfold. One would expect such machines to go into quantity production without further ado. However, the ministries prefer to develop their own machines. Do they really have to? This trend is all the more alarming now that the emphasis in the Siberia programme is to be shifted from geology to technology if we want it to be of maximum benefit to the national economy. Machines and high technology must now take the lead."

The one side of the coin

Let us now pause, give the academician a respite, and discuss the "subjective factor," which has a special role to play in the development of Siberia. Strength of character is essential to success in any endeavour, but in the extreme conditions of Siberia it is hard to overestimate. Work and life in Siberia weed out the weak. This part of the country is in special need of strong, creative, dynamic and I would even say daring personalities. Such as Shemyakin and Klushin, for instance.

There is another name worth recalling in this context. A few years ago doctor of science Yuri Matros reported to the learned council of the Institute of Catalysis on non-static processes in catalysis. Many disagreed with his theory then, but it was supported by Academician Georgi Boreskov, the director of the institute. As a result, this funda-

mental research effort found a host of practical applications. The non-static method of sulphuric acid production from waste gas is now used on an increasingly large scale in and outside our country. It is being patented, and licences for it are being sold.

This important acid is now produced from waste and even from effluents, with the urban environment improving as a result. A programme for the purification of the air of Siberian cities by non-static methods has already been adopted. Non-static installations are already in efficient operation at many mills belonging to the U.S.S.R. Nonferrous metallurgy Ministry—Alaverdi, Krasnouralsk, Mednogorsk and others. They are being introduced into the industry at an unprecedented rate, which would not have been the case but for the initiative and persistence of Dr Matros.

On the darker side of the coin, in Academician Boreskov's lifetime the said Institute of Catalysis came up with proposals for obtaining liquid fuel from brown coals found in the Kansk-Achinsk fuel and energy complex (KATEK) by means of new catalysts. Up to now these proposals have been implemented too slowly. KATEK is developed primarily on the traditional pattern using old, partially modernized equipment.

It is difficult to transmit electric energy over enormous distances from Siberia. Much of it is lost on the way. Carrying brown coal over such distances is harder still. Moreover, transport facilities even in Siberia, for all its rapid economic progress, are by no means unlimited. Liquid fuel can be carried in tanks—and far fewer such tanks are required than are vans for coal transportation. In short, science has convincingly argued and proved, beyond doubt, the advantages of liquid fuel, but progress towards its commercial production from brown coal is still slow. Why?

"We still don't have enough top-notch experts to get production going," Academician Shemyakin explained. "Besides, many prefer to stick to the habitual practice of piecemeal innovations, modernizations and improvements, while as a rule breakthroughs in science entail radical changes in production techniques. It is a difficult and often painful process, which encounters strong psychological resistance. Also evident here is a marked weakening of our engineering staff over the past few years. Specifically, the number of designers and process engineers has fallen.

"But I don't want to be misunderstood," the Academician went on. "Most people in our plants and mines understand the essence of the problems perfectly well, and realize what advantages the new scientific ideas offer. But many circumstances are beyond their control. I shall add one further example to those I've already given you. At the Novosibirsk tool factory a clever engineer invented a robot for feeding blanks into a press and removing finished components from it. The factory cannot make the thing and get it operational on its own. We have our hands full, but considering the situation we simply cannot stand aloof. The tool makers have extremely high production targets. Moreover, the factory has no reserve space in which to install new equipment.

"Any factory must make at least five per cent of its production space (let alone 15-20 per cent, as recommended by science) available for experimenting with original ideas. This ought to be made standard practice. We shall help the factory, of course, and make a prototype model, but it's time factories were provided with the conditions for keeping abreast of scientific and technological progress. So far, our factories are inadequately equipped for this."

The effect of an idea

"For years our mechanical engineering industry developed largely independently of science. Doesn't this explain why technological progress in the industry is handicapped by all sorts of obstacles?"

"Perhaps it does... In science, engineering problems are scattered over numerous design offices. And a great many such problems have accumulated. There is a need for new development trends, for macro- and micro-machines, new materials, composites and constructions... Academic institutes work for the engineering industry in some way or other, of course. But they deal with individual problems for the most part. The time has come for the establishment of a coordinating academic centre. As far as I know, the setting up of an academic institute of machine science in Novosibirsk has already been decided upon."

"Why there, of all places?"

"Novosibirsk offers unique possibilities for bringing science closer to production. It is a major centre of many industries, a city with a highly developed science. It boasts 16 colleges. In short, the city has everything it takes to resolve the most complex engineering problems."

"And not only those of Novosibirsk, I presume."

"That's right. Paradoxically, Novosibirsk is of little help to its own engineering industry as yet. For instance, we have developed single-stroke machines, which have indisputable advantages. Although we gave them vigorous publicity here, they were first put to practical use in the Urals and Chernobyl. We supply our new machines and advanced technology even to permafrost areas, but cannot always reach an agreement with the factory next door."

"Which of the Novosibirsk-born scientific ideas have won national recognition of late?"

"We'd better start having second thoughts about such conventional notions as 'natural wealth,' 'inexhaustible mineral resources,' 'mining efficiency.' Mines are moving to the remote parts of the country, Siberia and the Far North, although it is more difficult to extract coal and ore there. Nevertheless, most mining is still done in its traditional areas. This being so, we have to 'dig deeper' and, consequently, to spend more money on the driving and maintenance of ever more extensive mineworking networks, and on repair, ventilation and cooling, raising minerals from great depths, etc.

"In Kuzbas, for instance, which the entire Siberian economy heavily depends on, mine fields are opened by driving vertical and inclined shafts. These shafts pass chiefly through the middle of a field, but lots of coal found in the so-called piles intended to protect the underground and surface structures of the mine remain untapped.

"We have suggested a new automatic mine-opening technique-selection method which enables an expert to assess the economic efficiency of 200-300 opening options instead of merely two or three as previously. The most efficient way to open a high-value mineral deposit is from beyond the limits of the mine field lest there remain any untapped resources in the protective piles. Such rationalized seam-opening techniques effect an appreciable saving."

"As I looked through the latest thematic report on the Siberian branch's research projects, I noticed that it was compiled in a new way. The report contains a general description of the given project, a note on its potential practical uses, comments on how the idea works wherever it has been put into practice, the advantages of its current form, the social, technical and economic effect and, finally, suggestions for a still fuller and more efficient use of the project. Everything is explained in minute detail. Do you think practical workers will now respond more readily to what fundamental science has to offer?"

"I hope so. I am an optimist. My optimism is fostered by the situation now beginning to obtain in our country. Reconstruction is getting people more interested in new knowledge, i.e., in science. It stimulates initiative. And this is encouraging. It's time we started getting fundamental results from fundamental science."

Interviewer: ROLEN NOTMAN

Novosibirsk

INTERNATIONAL OF RESISTANCE

borrowed name, borrowed money, borrowed ideas

What is known about this émigré organization

Last March the French paper Le Figaro carried a letter under the heading "Let Gorbachev Give Us Proof." Purporting to be an attempt to respond to "the avalanche of news from Moscow which of late has caused amazement and even bewilderment among many decent people in both East and West," it in fact lampoons against the democratic changes now under way in the U.S.S.R. The letter is signed by V. Aksyonov, V. Bukovsky, A. and O. Zinovyevs, E. Kuznetsov, Y. Lyubimov, V. Maximov, E. Neizvestny, Y. Orlov, and L. Plyushch—people with different records who left our country for different motives. This time they have been brought together by an organization calling itself the International of Resistance, and the letter was published on its behalf.

A group of former citizens of socialist countries, representatives of Cuban gusanos, Somoza and Pol Pot bands, Afghan and Vietnamese counterrevolutionaries living in the U.S. met in Brussels in November 1982 to establish a new anti-communist organization. At first they called it the Anti-Totalitarian Committee, but on second thoughts decided to "borrow" words and symbols from others. The result was the pompous verbal concoction the International of Resistance.

Sponsors

The organization was sponsored by the following:

Vladimir Bukovsky, who tried to organize "storm troops" in the U.S.S.R. and was turned out of the country in 1976. Once in the U.S., Bukovsky announced, without undue modesty, that upon overthrowing Soviet power he would become president, and his mother vice-president.

Olga Svintsova—secretary of the Paris-based Intellectuals for a Europe of Liberties committee. She is also an emissary of the Popular Labour Alliance (NTS), but prefers not to publicize this. Set up in royal Yugoslavia by the white guard emigration leaders in 1930, the NTS supplied personnel for foreign secret services engaged in subversive activities against the U.S.S.R. In the war years she collaborated with the nazis, helping them establish their "new order" on temporarily occupied Soviet territory. After the "new order" collapsed in 1945, the NTS leaders went to work for the British and American secret services. In 1956, the English ceded the monopoly on the NTS to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Jose Furtado—a representative of the CIA-financed UNITA group of Angolan counterrevolutionaries in Paris.

Money

The chief guarantee those who gathered in Brussels needed was money. None of them had much faith in philanthropy. The guarantees were provided by Bukovsky.

At first he told them that some influential U.S. Congressmen had promised to finance their activity. Then Bukovsky named the principal guarantor, the CIA, and added that this source of funding would be kept secret, and so would Langley's participation.

At first Bukovsky brought the money from the United States himself, until the U.S. Congress ruled to allocate six million dollars a year to the International of Resistance. Substantial contributions came from the leadership of the AFL-CIO, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and from Zionist circles. True, émigré papers invited all those concerned to join the International of Resistance assistance committee (simply by remitting 100 francs to its account with membership cards sent out immediately on receipt of the money). Francs merely trickled in, however, while dollars came in a steady flow.

Contacts with benefactors in the U.S. are still maintained through Bukovsky.

Objectives

Shortly afterwards, the organizing committee was formed in the U.S., and the official constituent meeting of the International of Resistance was held in Paris (mid-May, 1983). The chief objectives of the organization were defined as to "unite all true fighters for the overthrow of communist rule," coordinate their activities, and spread "objective information about all forms of resistance to totalitarianism." Lest there should be any misunderstanding as to the kind of totalitarianism to be resisted, the sponsors promptly coined the term "Soviet-type totalitarianism."

Later, the IR's leaders formulated their objectives definitively as follows: "to infiltrate socialist countries and establish moral and physical support centres there."

Another target identified at the Paris meeting was the peace movement in the West. Millions in Western Europe were protesting against the imminent deployment of new American missiles there. The governments of the NATO countries accused participants in peace demonstrations of being "in collusion with Moscow," and planted agents provocateurs among them. Bukovsky also had a hand in baiting the Western peace campaigners. He published the book "Pacifists Against Peace" in which he dubbed peace fighters "useful fools" in the service of Moscow, mentioned "the ineradicable Catholic priests on suspicious missions," threw in, for good measure, a demand "to put an end to the Soviet system," and arrived at the curious conclusion: that disarmament would bring the U.S.S.R. to early ruin; consequently, the U.S.S.R. would never disarm.

The top

The Paris meeting elected the IR leadership, with Bukovsky as its president, and Eduard Kuznetsov as chairman.

On June 15, 1970, Eduard Kuznetsov had been one of those who tried to flee to Sweden by hijacking an AN-2 plane in Leningrad's airport. Today Kuznetsov is head of information department in the Russian service of the CIA-financed Radio Liberty.

Vladimir Maximov, the IR's executive

director, has been editing the anti-communist journal Continent since 1974. In 1977 he told an acquaintance that he was on the staff of Radio Liberty and drew a regular salary as high as that of an GS-13 American civil servant.

Cuban counterrevolutionary Armando Valladares, the IR's vice-president, started his career as a policeman in the service of the dictator Batista (badge No. 2747) in 1957. After the 1959 revolution, Valladares was offered a job, but he joined the underground group led by Obregon, a former Batista officer. In court, Valladares confessed to having planted cigarette pack booby traps in the streets of Havana.

The IR has an office on the Champs-Elysées in Paris. Émigré circles were wary of the new organization. Someone caustically remarked that the Champs-Elysées "resistance fighters" were fighting chiefly for lucrative jobs and a secure old age.... A statement by Alain Ravennes, secretary-general of the Intellectuals for a Europe of Liberties committee, hardly added to the IR's popularity. He had worked with Olga Svintsova, a sponsor of the International of Resistance, for a long time and certainly knew what he was talking about. In his opinion, the new organization was unlikely to win confidence in France and the rest of the world because two of its leaders—Kuznetsov and Maximov—were connected with the Israeli secret service.

Actions

The International of Resistance lost no time in going into action. Late in August 1983 it participated in the "three-day peace march for the liberation of the peoples" in the F.R.G. The bourgeois papers responded to the "march," but the population remained oppressively passive. In October, the IR organized the four-day forum "The Third World. Wither Bound?" in Paris. At that time Washington was speaking of "global penetration" by the U.S.S.R. and the Third World becoming an arena of confrontation. The participants in the Paris forum discussed in unison "the problems and tasks connected with organizing effective resistance to growing communist expansion." It transpired at the forum, for instance, that popular discontent with bloody military dictatorships in a number of Latin American countries was a result of the "export of communist ideology." Later, Vladimir Bukovsky, in a Voice of America interview, expressed his concern over the possibility of communism spreading in Chile. "Our eternal big problem is," he added, "to keep stressing and proving that we do not support dictatorial right-wing regimes."

Vice-President Valladares and many others in the International of Resistance find this a tall order.

A conference devoted to the "Afghan problem" was held on the IR's initiative in the European Parliament building in Brussels on November 25, 1983. By that time, contacts with the leaders of anti-Afghan groupings in Pakistan had been established on the insistence and with the cooperation of the CIA. The job was done by L. Thorn, a former member of the staff of Radio Liberty. In March 1984 Vladimir Bukovsky told a Voice of America interviewer that his organization "was doing a lot" with regard to Afghanistan. For instance, it was supplying counterrevolutionaries with radio transmitters to beam propaganda broadcasts to the population and to Soviet soldiers. The IR president dwelt at length on the technical aspects of the Radio Free Kabul project. It was probably through L. Thorn's failure to see to the delivery of the transmitters that the much-publicized project went badly wrong; a more likely explanation is that what Bukovsky was really making publicity for was himself rather than the project.

In 1984, the IR held an "international conference on misinformation," with the "communist countries" taking the rap, of course. The conference's sponsors preferred not to mention their own tricks of misinformation, such as the recent publication of a counterfeit issue of the paper Krasnaya Zvezda containing a provocative appeal to Soviet servicemen and a series of anti-Soviet anecdotes.

While Western papers carry documentary evidence of the contras' brutalities in Nicaragua, the IR arranges press conferences to advertise the knightly image of the "Nicaraguan freedom fighters." In 1985, the International of Resistance called upon the U.S. Congress, through the Paris Le Monde, to resume aid to the contras. It has made a regular practice of synchronizing its actions with those of the U.S. administration. For its part, the

● A CALL TO NEW YORK

What he didn't know

We put a call through to the sculptor Ernst Neizvestny in New York.

"What was your personal contribution to the letter that appeared in Le Figaro?"

"I was directly involved in the part of it dealing with graphic art and culture."

"What about the political sections?"

"I consider myself more of an artist than a politician."

"Do you subscribe to everything the letter says?"

"I put my signature to it."

"Does that mean you really subscribe to it?"

"I am compelled to be responsible for everything I've signed."

"You said 'compelled.' We have the impression that some passages in the letter are not entirely characteristic of you."

"I don't want to comment on that now."

"The letter was written on behalf of the so-called International of Resistance, an organization that is not particularly popular even in émigré circles. You put your signature to a letter issued by that organization. Didn't that make any difference to you?"

"The letter was written by my friends. I didn't know it came from that organization."

"It was published on behalf of the organization known as the International of Resistance and that's where it came from."

"There is no mention of that in any Western publication."

"Le Figaro mentioned the fact in the subheading."

"Not as far as I know. The New York Times says nothing about it."

"I mean the text that originally appeared in Le Figaro."

"I didn't see it."

"What's your attitude to this organization?"

"I simply don't know anything about it at the moment."

"You mean you don't know anything about the organization?"

"I know such an organization exists, but I have simply no idea of its character."

"How so? A lot of information about it has been made public. For instance, that its vice-president is a Batista policeman who planted booby traps in city streets—i.e., committed what we now call terrorist acts.... As you see, the organization is in no way humane or humanitarian."

"I am not in a position to comment because all you're saying is news to me. This is the first time I've heard about the organization in this context, or about the letter having been printed on its behalf."

White House never misses a chance to refer to the International of Resistance as a "voice of conscience" raised against "the empire of evil"; members of the International of Resistance, it implies, know the "evil" from the inside. "We must learn the lesson the Russian human rights champion Vladimir Bukovsky has taught us," the U.S. President told James Buckley, president of Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe. By the President's logic, the reference to the anti-Sovietist was supposed to justify the attacks on Afghanistan, Nicaragua and the U.S.S.R. that followed. "Learning Bukovsky's lesson" also meant getting down to the vigorous containment of "communist expansion."

The President's praise apart, the year 1985 was a black year for the International of Resistance in general and for some of its leaders in particular. The Free World Youth Conference, co-sponsored by the IR in Jamaica in 1985 to counterbalance the Moscow festival, ended in failure. The White House and the CIA allocated $60 million to the staging of this show initiated by Roy Godson, ex-deputy director of the CIA. While some delegates wrangled over seats on the "working committees," others suddenly started talking about disarmament and demanded an end to outside interference in the affairs of Latin American countries.

Bukovsky's speech on the "communist threat hanging over Latin America" evoked no response. A Venezuelan representative took it as "a love serenade to dictatorial regimes."

Indeed, the IR has its Achilles' heel.

This was followed by a "Baltic cruise," to which the IR attracted anti-Soviet émigrés from the Baltic republics of the U.S.S.R. The cruise came to an inglorious end in Helsinki, where the normally tolerant Finnish police arrested some of its participants for breaches of the peace.

Just over two years after it was founded, the IR cracked. Two clear-cut factions have emerged in its leadership, one headed by Kuznetsov, the other by Svintsova. The IR press service came out with contradictory definitions of the "front of the struggle" and of the organization's objectives. In the end Svintsova withdrew from the International of Resistance and accused Maximov, its executive director, of "dictatorial methods." Maximov's behaviour "perplexed and disappointed" even IR activists. Maximov refused to admit to the organization those émigré intellectuals who, in his opinion, "were not actively anti-Soviet enough."

In 1986, the International of Resistance kept a fairly low profile. The reason for this was not so much the squabbles its members were engaging in as its failure to respond to the process of reconstruction and democratization that had begun in the Soviet Union and the drive for glasnost there. Stereotypes like "Soviet commissars" and "Gulag" no longer worked. What line was there to take?

The letter

Finally, a letter signed by ten IR members appeared in Le Figaro, and other bourgeois media hastened to play it up.

"The publication of this letter in the Soviet press would be the most convincing proof that your talk of glasnost is sincere," the authors of the letter wrote, in what was intended as a smug challenge. Our colleagues in Moscow News took them at their word and did publish the letter, which spares us the need to discuss it in detail. So we'll confine ourselves to just a few comments.

The arguments the letter offers are shabby and based not on a knowledge of the country, which has become foreign to them, but on typical Western propaganda clichés that have obviously become the letter-writers' own.

The letter sounds like the work of IR activists, and largely echoes Bukovsky's "The Pacifists Against Peace." However, neither Bukovsky's signature, nor those of all three IR leaders would have produced the desired result. Therefore, "more impressive" names were dragged in. This publicity trick is nothing new. In the early days of the organization's existence, well-known extreme right-wing figures like Lord Nicholas Bethell and Winston Churchill Jr, the British parliamentarians and Simone Veil, ex-president of European Parliament, were put on the list of committee members.

We put a call through to New York, to Ernst Neizvestny, a man who had hitherto remained aloof from such actions, and asked him whether he knew he was identified with such a dubious organization. Ernst Neizvestny said he didn't (see an interview with him—**Ed.**).

Does this relieve him of all responsibility for the letter? Not at all. When "solitary artistes" claiming to be "fighters for the freedom of spirit" suddenly flock together, this produces a grotesque impression. What really matters, however, is that the letter in Le Figaro aims not so much at indicating the "inadequacy" of democratic changes in the U.S.S.R. as at denigrating and frustrating them. Political naiveté is no justification for failure to see this, and for hiring one's name out to political saboteurs.

The leaders of the International of Resistance have carried out another assignment. Whose assignment was it? The very nature of the International of Resistance makes the answer only too plain.

M. PUTINKOVSKY

IN RETROSPECT

Archangel, 1918...

Early in March 1918 the British cruisers Glory and Cochrane and the French cruiser Amiral Aube entered the port of Murmansk, and, on May 24, the American cruiser Olympia joined them.

Despite the Soviet government's protests and demands that the cruisers be withdrawn, the Entente continued to build up its armed forces in the north. On June 1, President Woodrow Wilson of the United States instructed Robert Lansing, his Secretary of State, to announce that the American government was willing to take part in the intervention and send its regular expeditionary troops to Murmansk.

On July 6, 1918, the interventionists—including Captain Bierer who commanded U.S. cruiser Olympia—established a military dictatorship in the region. Occupying troops gained a firm foothold in Murmansk and started advancing southward. In a matter of days they had taken the towns of Kem and Onega. By early August they had captured Mudyug Island, which lies in the mouth of Dvina bay and covers Archangel from the south. It was on that patch of wasteland that the American command set up one of its first "death camps."

"At 4 a.m. on October 2, 1918," eyewitness Marshavin, an Archangel physician, testified, "119 heavily-guarded prisoners were ordered out into the yard and driven to a barge which lay at Pomorskaya wharf. The barge was waterlogged and crusted with ice, but the escorts pushed us prisoners onto it. We thought they were going to drown us in the sea, but the barge was towed to Mudyug Island. Wading chest-deep through the ice-cold water, and urged along with rifle butts, our group—or rather what remained of it—barely made it to death island. We were crowded into a cold barrack and told to strip. Many did not live through the night."

The interventionists established a ruthless regime in the north of Soviet Russia. As many as 52,000 members of the local population were incarcerated. The occupiers' court-martials condemned 4,000 Soviet citizens to be shot by firing squads; thousands were hanged, drowned in rivers and tortured to death. Later, new American reinforcements arrived in Archangel: five thousand officers and men, with Colonel Stewart in command, were committed to action against the Red Army. ■

A biassed trial

pending for Mordechai Vanunu, a former employee of a secret nuclear centre in the Negev Desert

Several weeks ago I met New Times readers in Frunze, the capital of Kirghizia. When it came to the situation in the Middle East, one of the first questions put to me concerned the fate of Israeli technician Mordechai Vanunu, who for over ten years worked in the underground nuclear research centre in the sun-scorched and uninhabited Negev Desert. Following the dictates of his conscience, Vanunu decided to reveal the mystery of the Negev Desert and gave the London newspaper The Sunday Times information about the Dimona centre, along with several dozen photographs of it.

However, five days before the sensational information was published in The Sunday Times, Mordechai Vanunu disappeared. It later transpired that he had been abducted by Mossad agents in Italy and that NATO secret services were involved in the operation.

New Times ran two articles on the story (No. 44, 1986, and No. 2, 1987). On November 28 last, it reported, the Jerusalem district court had charged Vanunu with spying and divulging official secrets and that, in the opinion of Le Matin of Paris, he faced death or life imprisonment. Three weeks later, on December 21, 1986, Vanunu under heavy guard was brought to court for a secret trial.

Unsubdued

Photographs carried at the time in many newspapers and magazines showed warders twisting Vanunu's arms, gagging him and dragging him into the court. They were clearly having to deal with a man who had remained unsubdued and undaunted in spite of almost three months in solitary confinement.

Everything was done to crush Vanunu. His lawyer was strictly forbidden to divulge any information about his client. He was only allowed to say that Mordechai Vanunu had flatly denied the charges brought against him. It became known later that Vanunu had begun fasting in protest against his humiliating treatment in prison. Finally, he declared that he would defend himself in court.

The late-March reports that a trial in camera would at last be held have again kindled public interest in Mordechai Vanunu as an individual and the reasons that impelled him to divulge the official secrets.

The campaign launched by Zionist propaganda over the Vanunu affair revealed Tel Aviv's persistent desire to compromise the prisoner. The media presented him as an odd person, an avaricious spy who had sold state secrets. He was accused of "pro-Palestinian sentiments" which, in the Zionist view, is also treason. It was hinted that Vanunu had perhaps sold the Negev Desert secrets not only to The Sunday Times but also to Moscow.

Tel Aviv would evidently like to organize a sort of trial of the century, an atomic espionage trial like the one framed 30-odd years ago (in 1950-53) against Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, who were electrocuted.

Vanunu is sometimes called "pink," sometimes "red." He is accused of maintaining ties with Communists, which, in the eyes of the Zionist rulers, is tantamount to being politically unreliable. The scanty, casual and unverified information about him that appeared in various newspapers and magazines at the end of last year does suggest a leftward evolution in his views.

The Rev. John McKnight, a close Australian friend of Vanunu's, said recently that Mordechai had decided to tell the truth about the Israeli nuclear weapons after becoming acquainted with the activity of a peace group, as he was worried by Tel Aviv's policy.

Mr McKnight, one of the first to raise the alarm over Vanunu's disappearance, added that his friend had not received any money for what he told The Sunday Times and that he was only motivated by "very good and noble reasons." After this statement by a man who can hardly be open to suspicion or compromise, the Israeli secret services understood that they would be unable to present Vanunu as a Communist or fellow-traveller and therefore changed their tactic.

"Newsweek magazine reported," a UPI correspondent said in his dispatch from Jerusalem, "that agents of the Mossad, Israel's Intelligence Agency, kidnapped Vanunu from a yacht in the Mediterranean and brought him back for trial. Others suggested the Sunday Times report might be a Mossad plan to warn hard-line Arab states of Israel's supposed nuclear muscle."

Guard muffles Mordechai Vanunu, brought for a trial in camera.

The Newsweek story about Vanunu having been abducted from a yacht was immediately exposed as a Mossad fabrication and an attempt to gull public opinion and conceal the piratical actions of Israeli agents on the territory of sovereign Italy. However, the story that Mossad was behind Vanunu's actions was given wide publicity.

The scandal continues

It took Tel Aviv six months to prepare a secret trial. The delay does not seem unintentional, as time was needed

to break the prisoner's will and stage the trial in the political interests of the Zionist state. Moreover, Tel Aviv hoped that the uproar caused by the abduction of Vanunu, a cynical act of state terrorism, would subside, eclipsed by some other international scandal, as for instance, Irangate.

And if, judging from the information to hand, Vanunu could not be forced to submit, hopes that the scandal would abate seem to have been justified. On December 24 last, Bettino Craxi, then premier, declared that the Italian authorities were investigating the case of Vanunu's abduction in Rome. However, the results of the inquiry have not yet been made known. The French authorities did not comment on the report that the kidnapped Vanunu was then smuggled into Paris, from which point he was flown to Israel. The excitement in London over the role played by Britain's secret services in the shameful abduction has calmed down as well.

Nevertheless, the scandal continues. The point is not that Mordechai Vanunu, following the dictates of his conscience, spoke up against Tel Aviv's nuclear plans. Nor is it that he provided fresh evidence of the mass murder weapon having been acquired by Israel with direct or indirect help from NATO countries.

The main point is that Mordechai Vanunu posed in the starkest terms the question of the responsibility to mankind of those who are aggravating the threat of nuclear war and basing their policy on nuclear weapons. This is the reason why he is being tried in Israel.

But while by incarcerating him Tel Aviv was able to silence Vanunu, it is unable to do likewise with others. For instance, journalists from the Shueisha newspaper concern in Japan have prepared a report on Tel Aviv's secret nuclear programmes. It states specifically, that Israeli pilots are testing ways of using nuclear weapons at a secret proving ground in the Negev Desert. Small nuclear charges of an enhanced yield have been chosen for the purpose. They are delivered to their targets by U.S.-made F-16 fighter-bombers or Israeli-made Jericho missiles. Drawing on secret sources, leading Japanese experts have confirmed the information supplied by Vanunu to The Sunday Times. According to the Japanese magazine Gunji Kenkyu, the enrichment of uranium began at Dimona in 1964, and up to 40 kg of plutonium is now produced there yearly. Ryuichi Hirokawa, an expert in Middle East affairs, believes that Israel has today not 100 to 200 nuclear charges, as was held earlier, but "more than 200 nuclear charges ready for immediate use in a combat situation."

Articles about the unholy alliance between Tel Aviv and Pretoria have recently appeared again in the world press. For instance, The Washington Post has reported of a document signed by the two countries. It provides for scientific and technological cooperation and serves as a basis for pooling the resources of the two countries in nuclear research. Israeli nuclear physicists and technicians, the newspaper said, regularly visit South Africa. Many suspect that joint tests of the nuclear bomb were carried out over the South Atlantic in September 1979, though both sides deny this. South Africa is known to supply the uranium needed for Israel's civil and military installations, including the bomb manufacturing plant at the Dimona reactor in the Negev Desert.

Last October, immediately after Vanunu's revelations, a group of Arab countries proposed to include the question of Israel's nuclear weapons on the agenda of the current 41st session of the U.N. General Assembly. In a letter to the U.N. Secretary-General, they wrote of the extremely dangerous nuclear preparations by Israel and claimed that these preparations were being carried out in violation of U.N. resolutions and without inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The General Assembly denounced Israel for its refusal to implement previous resolutions on this question. It was also decided to include the question of Israel's nuclear policy on the agenda for the next session.

But Tel Aviv, relying on U.S. support, does not care a straw. It did not accede to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty signed in 1968 and still refuses to place its nuclear centres under international inspection.

Intimidation

But let us return to the Vanunu affair. It is believed that the leakage of nuclear secrets from Dimona may have been organized by Tel Aviv in order to cow the Arab countries and impose its political settlements on them by nuclear blackmail. There are some grounds for suspecting that this is really the case. Having suffered a number of political setbacks in the Middle East over the recent period, the strategic allies—Tel Aviv and Washington—could indeed resort to nuclear blackmail. At the same time, as was demonstrated in the United Nations last October, the Arab peoples did not take fright after Mordechai Vanunu confirmed that Tel Aviv had nuclear arms. For imperialist and Zionist propaganda has been intimidating the Arabs with the Israeli nuclear weapon since the 1970s. The U.N. debates have shown that the Arab countries take Israel's nuclear threat seriously. However, it cuts both ways. The use of nuclear weapons by Tel Aviv in such a small geographical region as the Middle East would be suicide for the aggressor state. This is understood in both the Arab capitals and Tel Aviv. As for the claim that the appearance of nuclear weapons in Israel rules out a military settlement of the Middle East problem, Tel Aviv is well aware—though it does not admit this openly—that the Arab countries are working for a political, not a military solution and that the idea of holding an international conference on the Middle East with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties con-

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Mordechai Vanunu's snapshot of the Dimona nuclear centre.

From L'Espresso (Italy) and The Sunday Times (Britain)

cerned is gaining increasingly wide support both in the region and worldwide.

It is a political solution that Israeli rulers fear most of all, as this would inevitably devalue the role of U.S. policeman which the Zionist state is discharging in the region today. And this could lead to a drastic cut in U.S. political, economic and military aid to Israel. For Washington gives nothing for nothing.

Yet today more and more Israelis favour a political solution of the Middle East problem. They are weary of the 40-year-old state of war and are putting increased pressure on the ruling quarters to achieve a peaceful settlement. Mordechai Vanunu's courageous actions symbolize and reflect such sentiments. This is why Tel Aviv hopes that trying him in camera will intimidate the advocates of a peaceful settlement within the country.

It is no accident that four Israeli peace activists were put in the dock on the eve of the Vanunu trial. In November 1986 they took part in a meeting with a delegation from the Palestine Liberation Organization. The four peace activists are charged with violating the August 1986 act, which forbids Israeli citizens to establish contacts with representatives of "terrorist organizations." (Incidentally, it is the first trial under this act.)

Simultaneously, in Jerusalem police arrested Michel Warshawski, head of the Alternative Information Centre, which informs public opinion and the press of Israeli violations of human rights in the occupied Arab territories.

The trials of Mordechai Vanunu and the four peace activists, as well as the arrest of Michel Warshawski, are links in the same chain. The Zionist state, which blatantly flouts all norms of international law both in the occupied Arab territories and within Israel itself, has launched an attack on the opponents of its adventurist policy.

The interest shown by New Times readers in the fate of Mordechai Vanunu is easily understood, for he is fighting to prevent nuclear catastrophe and remove the threat hanging over mankind.

EVGENY KORSHUNOV

Will parliamentary elections bring changes?

The army and its opponents

The outcome of the elections, due on April 23, can already be considered a foregone conclusion. Of the 500 seats in the House of Representatives, 100 have been set aside in advance for the army, which has since 1965 been the leading political force in the country with its population of almost 170 million.

Gologan Karya (Golkar), an organization of functional groups, a sort of mass front under the aegis of the army and state apparatus, claims 70 per cent of the remaining 400 seats. Judging from three previous elections (1971, 1977 and 1982), it can be predicted with a fair degree of certainty that, with the support of the military, Golkar will achieve its aim. The commander-in-chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces, General L.B. Murdani, reported to the head of state, General Suharto, in September 1986 that the army "is prepared to control the course of the election campaign."

The remaining 100-120 seats will be contested by two parties—the Democratic Party of Indonesia (DPI) and the Muslim Development Unity Party (DUP). They cannot hope for more because they are weakened by internal strife and divisions. A special commission minutely scrutinizes the loyalty of candidates and since the start of the campaign has already struck off the lists 60 of the 800 candidates nominated by Golkar, 250 of the 800 DUP candidates and 259 of the 629 DPI candidates. It was in anticipation of such "selection" that the number of candidates nominated by Golkar and the two parties was far in excess of the seats to be contested.

But even if the improbable happens and one of the two parties wins a majority in parliament there is nothing to guarantee its participation in governing the country, if only because ministers are appointed by the head of state, regardless of the representation of political forces in parliament. As for possibilities of parliament to control the activities of the government, they are virtually nil because the cabinet is responsible only to the president.

Nevertheless, all three previous election campaigns have been stormy, with political passion peaking and resulting in spontaneous clashes, which could well explain why this time the army leadership stated that it was undesirable "to mobilize the broad masses to hold election meetings which could lead to a flare-up of emotions, disturbances and acts of violence."

But if the outcome of the elections is a foregone conclusion, why all the excitement? Evidently because every section views them as a unique possibility: for the army to consolidate its rule, for the parties to assert their right to existence, and for rank-and-file voters to be involved in politics, if only briefly, and express their attitude to the existing state of affairs in the country.

After the economic boom

This time the elections in Indonesia will take place in a more complex situation than any that has existed over the past twenty years. The fairly confident economic development of the 1970s, stimulated by the high prices of the oil exported by the country and the influx of Western investments and credits, gave way to the slump of 1982, followed, after a brief interval, by a new recession due largely to declining oil prices. Economic growth rates have dropped from 6.1 per cent in 1984 to 1.9 per cent in 1985 and 1 per cent in 1986. The slump brought with it a rise in prices and growing unemployment. To stimulate export, the government devalued the Indonesian rupiah by 45 per cent in September 1986.

Indonesia's heavy dependence on Western credits and investments is making itself felt. Whereas debt servic-

ing in 1981 amounted to 10 per cent of export revenues, in 1986 the figure exceeded 30 per cent. And this in the context of the dwindling influx of foreign investments on which the Indonesian economy is largely oriented. Indeed, this influx diminished from $2.5 billion in 1983 to slightly under $700 million in 1985.

People in Indonesia are worried that a continuation of these unfavourable trends might cancel out such unquestionable achievements as self-sufficiency in rice, the staple food crop, increased production in some industries, including the manufacturing industry, restraints on inflation, and control, to a large extent, over the prices of prime necessities. The authorities also count on the credit side the slight decline in population growth rates and the maintenance of the state foreign currency reserves at a comparatively high level.

At present the government is taking measures to increase the production and export of commodities not linked to oil and gas, and expand trade and economic ties with socialist and developing countries. During the recent talks by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze with Indonesian leaders in Jakarta, the two parties stated their intention to make fuller use of the existing possibilities to expand the mutually advantageous trade.

In the long term, of course, these measures can help mitigate the economic difficulties. But their effect will be felt only at some future date. So far the situation remains complex, the more so in that the West, particularly the United States, is trying in every way to prevent Indonesia from appearing on the world market as an exporter of manufactures.

The snowballing of economic difficulties is accompanied by socio-political changes. The development of capitalism in Indonesia has resulted in greater class and property discrepancies in the population. In turn, this causes ferment in town and countryside. And although organizations of working people remain outlawed, the ferment often surfaces in the most diverse forms, some of them violent. The sway of foreign capital also gives rise to discontent. The public views it not only as a source of the country's growing economic dependence, but also as a real threat to existing traditional and national cultural values.

Search for an alternative?

The middle class has grown considerably in Indonesia as a result of the development of capitalism. The number of local businessmen, and the scientific-technical intelligentsia associated with them, has increased. They are objectively interested in curtailing the army leadership's state prerogatives in favour of civilian quarters, in giving representatives of the national bourgeoisie access to the direct administration of the country, and increasing the role of representative bodies. The new composition of Indonesian society calls for a readjustment of the political superstructure in line with the level of economic and technical modernization achieved by this society in past decades. In short, a bourgeois-liberal opposition is forming in Indonesia which, despite all its internal contradictions and the class limitations of its demands for democratization, could in the future play an important role in the country's political life.

Sumatra, Indonesia's most important oil mining centre.

But the military retain the political initiative and are not inclined to make any concessions whatsoever in the question of power sharing. General Murdani and the other military leaders have stated flatly that nobody can call the army's guiding role in society into question. These statements are being backed up by political and administrative measures designed to prevent changes in the present setup and preclude any alternative whatsoever.

The Communist Party of Indonesia, outlawed in 1966, is subjected to the most ruthless persecutions. Purges of the state apparatus are not abating. Not only those who are deemed left wing, but often even distant relatives of members of progressive organizations banned more than two decades ago are being expelled from it.

Two years ago the government made parliament adopt a law declaring the five Panca Sila principles of state ideology obligatory for all parties and public organizations. These five principles are: belief in a single god, democracy, the national unity of the country, social justice and humanism.

Taken on their own, these principles are unexceptionable. But political groupings in Indonesia fear that by retaining a monopoly right to interpret official ideology and pass judgement on the extent to which the behaviour of an organization accords with these five principles, the military leadership has acquired a universal tool for further tightening its control over all political and public activity in the country.

The restrictions imposed by the authorities on legal possibilities for discussing the fundamental problems of society have not and cannot eliminate existing differences of views. Rather the reverse is the case: differences of views are becoming more acute.

This is one of the reasons for the growth of the Islamic opposition movement. The Muslim opposition acts both inside the existing legal structure and outside it. It appeals to the population at large who are dissatisfied with the restrictions of democratic freedoms and the negative consequences of capitalist development, and who, given the ban on the dissemination of progressive ideology, see no alternative to the existing situation other than in religious terms. It is thus that the Islamic leaders attract people from all sections of society, including young people. True, they are not offering a tangible, positive programme that could be presented as an alternative to the government's present course. Yet, in the opinion of many observers in Indonesia, some of them close to the military leadership, the Muslim extremists pose a potential threat to political stability.

The problems with which Indonesia is approaching the fifth general elections in its history did not originate today or yesterday. They were generated by the country's entire past development. But now they have become so acute that any measures taken to resolve them will in many ways determine the outlook for Indonesian society in the foreseeable future.

ALEXANDER YURIEV

Micromed—
a joint Soviet-Hungarian enterprise

Micromed is the name of the first joint Hungarian-Soviet enterprise for the production of automated diagnostic sets for mass checkups of the population commissioned in Hungary. This modern medical equipment is a result of the fusion of Hungarian microprocessor technology and Soviet research.

Micromed was founded by the All-Union Medical Engineering Research Institute (VNIIMP) and the Hungarian firm Medicor. It is a marriage at once of specialists in the two countries, and of science and industry.

The partners

Medicor is located in Budapest and has subsidiaries in many towns in the republic, including Esztergom. It produces about 400 types of medical equipment and more than 2,000 types of medical instrument. More than half of the output is exported to almost 70 countries, the Soviet Union being one of Medicor's biggest customers.

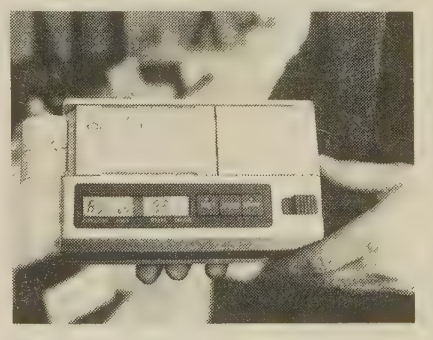
Medicor's products are specialized and labour-intensive. By using the latest achievements of science and perfecting its technology, the enterprise is not only expanding the range of its output but is also quickly switching to the manufacture of ever more advanced medical equipment and instruments. Medicor manufactures roentgen generators, portable diagnostic instruments such as myographs and electrocardiographs, in short, everything that is so rapidly and irreversibly joining the arsenal of contemporary medicine.

VNIIMP is primarily responsible for research and development. Vladimir Viktorov, Doctor of Sciences and director of the institute, is rightly called one of the fathers of Micromed. He recalls how the idea arose, at first seeming just a seductive idea but with time winning many dedicated supporters.

"Why did we team up?" he repeated the question. "The time factor made it essential. Look how rapidly scientific solutions and technologies succeed each other in the course of manufacturing equipment. It is hard to keep pace with these changes... It is also clear that the production capacities we are now creating as a result of the merger will, on the one hand, free each side of the need to import from capitalist countries and, on the other, enable us to appear on the international market."

"When did you begin to feel this?"

"About three years ago we proposed setting up a joint enterprise and did a feasibility study. The idea is quite simple: we have research facilities and new research and development, but our industry is slow in getting production off the ground. At the same time our Hungarian colleagues have a dynamic modern production base. By joining forces we can create an enterprise responsive to new scientific ideas and the demands of the world market. For instance, if microprocessor technology is used in the production of medical equipment, any doctor will be able to carry in his pocket, say, a portable cardiograph that is as convenient and simple to handle as an electronic wrist watch...."



Micromed's "first."
Photo by V. Panov

The beginning

Says Istvan Martos, director-general of Medicor: "We began by looking together with Soviet colleagues for local resources to set up a joint enterprise. We decided to use one of Medicor's subsidiaries as a base, the precision mechanics and electronics plant in Esztergom.

"Everything Micromed does, including marketing, is based on principles of self-financing. The charter of the new enterprise takes its specific features into account, but in practical terms has copied the legal norms of other mixed enterprises already operating in Hungary.

"An authorized capital of 168 million forints was established to underwrite Micromed's operations. Each partner contributed an equal share. The Hungarian share consisted of material assets while the Soviet side made its contribution in cash. To meet new expenditure (as from 1988) for production needs it is intended to increase the authorized capital by another 56 million forints. The profits of the enterprise, including those in freely convertible currency, are to be shared out equally between the founders after compulsory payments have been deducted. It is still difficult to predict the profits but I will give you the following figures as an illustration: Medicor's production programme envisages an annual output of 100 million rubles by 1991 and thereafter, of 280 million rubles."

A further question to Istvan Martos: "What are the main difficulties now encountered by the joint enterprise?"

"Any number of impediments of the same type have been revealed in the economies of our countries, as have common questions that require solutions. First, there is the problem of price structuring, which follows a different pattern in our two countries, different methods of labour remuneration and mutual deliveries. There are also many legal factors... But, still, our ship is under way."

A question to Vladimir Viktorov, the VNIIMP director: "What is being done to overcome these difficulties?"

"'Draw up proposals to remove the impediments and we will remove them,' we were told at the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. And we are now preparing such proposals with due account for the main objective—to retain the system of prompt deliveries of components and reduce to the minimum—one month!—the time needed to develop new products. This will take a tremendous effort."

"In that case, could I have a frank answer to the following question: would it not have been simpler to continue working in the old way? Could we have done the job without the Hungarians, or the Hungarians without us?"

"In theory we could have done it in eight-ten years. We would need time to design and build the enterprises and fit them out with equipment... But by then we would have discovered that the equipment had become obsolete and new equipment was necessary. So the do-it-yourself approach will not work. We would have wasted money and still failed to catch up with world progress. Things are different with the joint enterprise: we are starting production in

April. Take this cardiograph, for instance," and he lovingly displayed on his palm a thin box, smaller in size than a pocket calculator. "We have already spent more than a million on the development of this beauty. But whereas in the past we would get our investment back at best within a period of ten years, at our joint enterprise we will start making profits and recouping on our investment as early as April."

"You mean that Micromed will bring in profits from the outset?"

"Since the plant has gone into operation, profits must flow back as well—in rubles, forints and the currencies of third countries. We intend during the first three-four years to spend our profits on expanding production, and thereinafter on social needs and requirements. We intend to establish ourselves firmly on the international market, offering new models and new products every year."

The plant

It is not hard to find the precision mechanics and electronics plant in Esztergom. The buildings are visible from a long way off. And director Bela Badi is well known in the town, having devoted almost twenty years to producing medical equipment and instruments. In the near future he will have to stand for election to the post of director of Micromed. People in a position to know say he is a worthy candidate. He has won a State Prize for developing a system of new generation microprocessor diagnostic equipment.

"We know that Micromed will be a trailblazer in solving many questions of restructuring cooperation," the director says. "We have ventured into the unknown but there are some points of reference with which we are already familiar: thus, the number one task is to synchronize our work with that of our Soviet partners, as taking part in the production of equipment under the Micromed trademark are the Moscow plant Ritm, and enterprises in Lvov and several other Soviet cities. Quality is a special concern. We have decided to do without centralized quality control in order to avoid additional outlays of time and money. We are introducing checks at the final stage of production and after delivery."

The appearance of Micromed is a milestone in socialist integration. Many collectives at large industrial enterprises and research institutions in the two countries will have to pass the difficult test of maturity. The time is not far off when similar enterprises will be set up in the key industries of our countries—transport, electronics and engineering.

ALEXANDER KUZMIN,
BORIS KOZLOV

Budapest-Moscow

Sense of responsibility, social involvement

Dialogue with Zdenek Pluhar

Zdenek Pluhar is a leading Czech prose-writer whose best-known novels, "If You Leave Me" and "One Piece of Silver," have been translated into Russian and gone through many editions. His name was third, after Karel Capek and Jaroslav Hasek, on the list of most popular Czech writers, compiled by the Prague Literarni mesicnik magazine.

It is not only his novels, his literary prizes and other honours that account for Pluhar's popularity. An engineer by education he built 12 bridges and a dam. At the time of the nazi occupation he was arrested twice and escaped execution by a sheer miracle.

His books afford an insight into life in Czechoslovakia after 1945. The difficult choice that had to be made in the first postwar years, when every individual had to decide which road to take; the labour enthusiasm of the 1950s which generated so many ecstatic but artistically mediocre books; the crisis of the late 1960s and its resolution. Zdenek Pluhar is one of those who helped modern Czech literature preserve its individuality and its honour, as Josef Rybak, another well-known Czechoslovak writer, put it.

Some years ago, in one of his essays, Pluhar shared his thoughts on what literature can do in the world of today, where "the criteria of humanity are distorted and the basic principles of morality are threatened." I asked Pluhar the same question when we met recently in Prague.

"I have often heard it said that literature, belles lettres has lost its significance, that it is dying," he replied. "The tempo of life is accelerating, man is deluged by a mass of information, people live in fear of a military conflict, and seem to have neither the time nor the desire to read thick novels.

"I do not believe these pessimistic prognostications, although the booksellers maintain that of late the demand for good literature is declining. I re-

fuse to believe that man does not need beauty. I do not think that the sole purpose of life is to satisfy material needs. What of the capacity for aesthetic enjoyment, for the higher things of life, that which moves us to the depths of our being? Can I ever forget the tears I first shed over the famous Czech children's book "Glowworms"? I have much experience in life, but I do not think that emotionally I have been less enriched by literature than by life.

"At the same time literature affords not only aesthetic and emotional pleasure, it helps us to learn much about the world and human beings, and although this approach is none too popular among the youth nowadays, literature nevertheless should have an educational influence.

"I cannot conceive of a writer indifferent to what goes on around him, to the fate of the people among whom he lives. Literature has a very important social role to play. The writer with a sense of responsibility strives to influence that life, he has what in modern usage is termed a social commitment.

"In his books he must speak the truth not only about the world around him but also about himself. How? By not concealing his attitude to what is happening, by appraising it honestly. Only then can he count on winning the confidence of his readers.

"Literature is an exchange of ideas. Let me remind you of what Bernard Shaw once said: if you and I each have an apple and we exchange them, the result will be negligible—I shall have one apple and so will you. But if we exchange ideas, each of us will be twice as rich as before. Moreover one idea engenders another. Literature today has another, and perhaps the most important, task: to remind people of the value of peace, of the need to fight for peace, of the fact that peace is the most precious thing. This is most deeply felt by all who lived through the war."

"You still write about the war?"

"How can one not write about it? I know that my novel 'One Piece of Silver' has been translated into Russian. It is about the Slovak National Uprising. I know what fascism means. I have personal experience of nazi prisons. I was a political prisoner from the beginning of 1944 until the end of the war. I was arrested for trying to obtain papers for an underground resistance fighter sought by the Gestapo. Every day in jail could have been my last."

"After the war Czechoslovak literature for the first time sought to depict labour as a creative endeavour. This was something of an experiment. There appeared a host of "production novels," but only a few withstood the test of time. A great many of them bore the stamp of dogmatism and superficiality. Turning to the production theme was in itself logical: it made it possible to place the hero in a conflict situation which revealed his character. But the conflict was built on the formula "innovator versus conservative" and the latter in the end always discredited himself. The artificiality of the construction doomed the author to failure. At the time, however, no one regarded these books as failures. Why, then, did Pluhar's novels and stories written in those years and belonging by all tokens to the category of "production prose"—"The Blue Valley" (1954), for instance,—prove an exception?"

"Our literature," Pluhar explained, "suffered from the same ailment as the literatures of all other people's democracies. Wishing to help their countries build the new life, writers published novels urging the people to put their shoulders to the wheel. They sang the praises of front-runners, shock workers, and innovators, and did so in all sincerity, inspired by the common fervour of upbuilding. But in spite of these noble intentions, nearly all these books were short-lived. They lacked artistic depth. They featured only positive characters. Form was sacrificed to content."

"What about yourself? Would you say that man on the production line interested you more than the production itself? That you were preoccupied with the ethical aspect?"

"I have always been interested in people's behaviour in complex situations, when their actions are guided by their conscience and their moral principles."

"We know that dogmatism dealt no little harm to literature, that overcoming it was likewise not without extremes, and many Czechoslovak writers failed to grasp the complexities of the situation. After the events of 1968, literature advanced to a new plane of artistic perception."

"Yes, since the 1970s a heightened interest in the individual, a striving to portray our contemporary in depth, to depict his moral essence, his responsibility to society, to the epoch, to himself have become distinctive features of our literature."

"I recall your novel 'The Last Stop' written in the 1970s. It has been translated into Russian, but for the benefit of those who have not read it yet, I would like to say a few words about it. The action takes place in an old people's home. Instead of Pluhar's usual dynamic development of plot, here we have a slow-moving narrative, lengthy reflections on the part of the characters, detailed descriptions of the dreary environment of people who are approaching their final destination in life. The leading characters, and with them the author, look back over their lives, reappraising their own actions, themselves. Morality, honour, conscience—these are the concepts the author focusses on. His characters relive their encounters with complex moral problems and with difficulty find the correct solution. Here again we have the theme of moral choice. The problem is of particular importance for you, is it not?"

"The crucial choice that determines the entire subsequent course of the hero's life is a theme characteristic of all of Czechoslovak literature today. The country's complex history has imparted a specific, tragic relevance to this problem. As a matter of fact, this is perhaps the leitmotif of all 20th century literature. I know that Soviet readers liked my novel 'If You Leave Me.' It, too, is about people who are faced with a choice and make a mistake, who become émigrés of their own free will."

"What is the salient feature of Czech literature of the current decade?"

"There was a time when the critics accused writers of operating with a 'hidden camera,' of merely reflecting life without giving very much thought to it. In recent years young writers have begun to analyze more deeply the complex phenomena of our time. One might say that they display a keener sense of responsibility. Among other features, I would mention the declining interest in the historical novel."

"How would you explain that?"

"This genre was exhaustively dealt with by preceding generations of writers. There is also the fact that the critics are pressing for books about our contemporaries. In my view, however, it is not the time in which the actions of a literary work take place that makes it contemporary. A book about Socrates can be more relevant than a poor novel about the life of a worker in our day. Contemporaneity is the sense of continuity conveyed through the medium of art."

"Now my last question: are you one of those authors who prefer not to answer questions about their plans?"

"No, I am not. I may tell you that I want to write my reminiscences. Memoirs are extremely popular in our country. Of course, this sometimes conceals an unhealthy interest in scandalous details of the private lives of famous people, but seriously speaking, I would like to try to combine the seemingly incompatible: reminiscences with fiction. I shall place my invented characters in real historical settings, and with my help they will come to life. The time of the action will be from 1918, when Czechoslovak state was established, to 1938, when the republic perished. I shall do my best not to disappoint my readers, Soviet readers included. I am very glad to hear that several of my books are at present being translated in your country."

LEONID MLECHIN

Prague—Moscow

Time is the best judge

The desert encroaches on the road a few dozen kilometres northwest of Baghdad. There are fewer and fewer green oases, people, birds or animals until at last nothing but sand is visible. The hot wind ruffles the sparse blades of stunted desert flora, whipping up frightening sandstorms on the horizon. Only oncoming vehicles and the emergency telephones planted by the roadside at regular intervals are a reminder of the presence of humans.

You accelerate involuntarily until at last the road runs parallel with the Euphrates, and immediately—as if by a miracle, a mirage, dense palm groves, orchards, tilled fields and bright green grass appear, and swarthy smiling peasant faces flash past.

This is how the ancient legendary land of Mesopotamia, wonderful and amazingly fertile wherever there is water, but lifeless and hostile where there is not, has always been.

The tiny cosy town of Haditha which hugs the riverbank is a living museum of Arab antiquities. However, for several years its narrow by-ways have been without their age-old tranquility, as day after day caravans of lorries carrying building materials, equipment and people pass through it.

This is because, a little higher up the Euphrates, construction of the powerful Al Qadisiya hydroproject, on which the Soviet Union is cooperating with Iraq, is nearing completion. The huge reservoir will irrigate hundreds of thousands of hectares of arid land. The first unit of this Soviet-designed station which, built with Soviet technical assistance, has a projected capacity of 660,000 kw, is already generating.

The impersonal term, "technical assistance," in fact boils down not only to credits and blueprints, but also to the hundreds of people who have been working for years to stem this distant river in the Middle East.

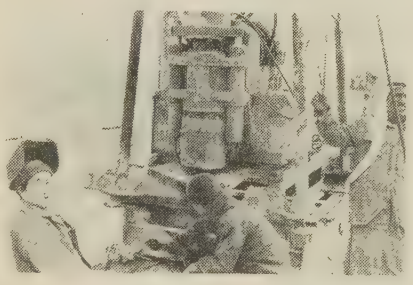
Each time I visit the construction site, I am amazed by the cohesion with which everything operates there. Dozens of huge Soviet trucks, excellently adapted to local conditions, roar past, explosions thunder in the rock and excavators and dredges rumble, as the dam rises. Here Soviet and Iraqi specialists are working shoulder to shoulder.

"Do you find a common language?" I asked interpreter Alexander Goltsov.

"And how! In fact, I think I'll soon be losing my job," he chuckled, indicating Dmitry Kalinkevich, who with Munzer Bakr was animatedly discussing a blueprint in an amazing mixture of Russian and Arabic.

All sorts of things can be calculated—how many cubic metres of rock had to be extracted (no less than 30 million!) to erect the dam, how efficiently Soviet equipment is being exploited and even how many innovations and unconventional solutions have been proposed in the course of construction (for instance, the asphalt and concrete core wall that reinforces the dam's impermeability).

"But how is one to calculate the commitment, talent and energy of the thousands of splendid skilled workmen, in short, all that has made the body of the dam indestructible for centuries to come?" I underlined this point, made by Basem al-Abaiji, the construction project's general director, in my notebook.



At the construction site.

Photo by the author

"The construction project has been a marvellous school, not only as regards work in difficult, at times extreme, conditions, but also as regards friendship, internationalism and genuine mutual assistance for both Soviet people and Iraqis," chief Soviet expert Victor Skripnikov says.

The Al Qadisiya hydroproject is only one of the hundred or so economic installations erected in Iraq through cooperation with the U.S.S.R., cooperation that has encompassed key branches of the economy. Irrigating mains have been dug, power plants constructed, and enterprises in both heavy and light industry built. Furthermore, a pool of Iraqi specialists has been trained: indeed, educational and cultural cooperation is of no mean significance for Iraq's independent development. However, special mention must be made of Iraq's chief asset—oil, which has unquestionably shaped its destiny.

The Soviet Union came to the country's help at a turning point in its history, when it nationalized the oil industry in the early 1970s, a revolutionary move that presented an exemplary model for many developing countries. The U.S.S.R. helped it break the economic boycott of the Western monopolies. The tanker that took on the first consignment of nationalized oil flew the Soviet flag. Today Soviet oilmen are helping expand and improve oil extraction.

The U.S.S.R. and Iraq signed their Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation on April 9, 1972. This document was both a result of, and a firm foundation for, further progress in the friendly relationship. The past 15 years have shown that neither Moscow nor Baghdad were mistaken in viewing the agreement as essential in consolidating the anti-imperialist solidarity and cooperation of our two peoples and strengthening Iraq's political and economic independence.

"Time is the most unbiassed and infallible judge of the sincerity and firmness of our friendship," Najih Mohammad Khalil, President of the Iraqi-Soviet Friendship Society, told me.

Yet above the dam, anti-aircraft guns bristle on the alert. Even here, hundreds of kilometres from the front lines, one feels the tragic breath of the Iran-Iraq war, which has so greatly impaired the country's economy and retarded its advance. Nevertheless, Soviet-Iraqi cooperation is weathering all the storms. Despite the war, Soviet specialists are working on many economic installations. Commercial, cultural and scientific links are growing.

The Soviet Union, as was reaffirmed in the Soviet government's statement of January 8, 1987, resolutely advocates the earliest ending of the Iran-Iraq war and a peaceful settlement of the conflict, and all controversial issues, through negotiations. This position of principle is greatly appreciated by both the government and the people of friendly Iraq.

ANDREI VASILINOV

Baghdad—Moscow

Journey into the bush

One day at a Namibian refugee camp

From our own correspondent
NIKOLAI RESHETNYAK

From Lusaka we headed west to the town of Mumbwa, then along the Kafue River valley to the small town of Kaoma, and straight on into the bush. That brought us to the Namibian refugee camp situated in Zambia. We wanted to see how people lived and worked in the camp, and what they taught their children. They had been deprived of their country by the South African racists, but firmly believed that their time would come, and that their country would win freedom.

Starting from scratch

It took us about two hours of fast driving to cross the Kafue National Park, the largest in Zambia. We saw the lions slumbering peacefully after feeding, the herds of timid antelopes, and the startled-looking giraffes.

As we drove across the park my fellow-travellers silently prayed that nothing would happen to the car. For if anything did happen we could not count on help: there were no people around. Nor could you get out of the car to check what had gone wrong: for no one can predict how a lion, elephant or rhinoceros nearby will react to your appearance. The greatest danger to travellers, however, is posed not by these big animals but by a small denizen of the bush—the tsetse fly. It is a carrier of trypanosoma which causes sleeping sickness, a disease for which so far no effective cure has been found. There are also vast areas where a species of the tsetse fly whose bite kills cattle and horses is common. Attempts to combat the tsetse fly are being made, but no breakthrough has yet been achieved.

After we had crossed the Kafue National Park, we were stopped at a special post and were asked to get out, while with an ordinary butterfly net the man on duty calmly removed about a dozen tsetse flies from the car.

We had reached the Namibian refugee camp, officially known as the Health and Education Centre. It was founded in 1975, when the first activists of the patriotic South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), fleeing from the threat of physical extermination by the South African colonialist authorities, arrived with their families. Many of them already knew what it was like to be arrested—they had tasted prison life and torture. The camp also provided a refuge for the wives and children of men who had been killed in the guerrilla army fighting for the liberation of their country illegally occupied by the South African regime, or were being held in prison.

Kindergarten.

They started from scratch, building mud huts. And although prefabricated houses are now going up as part of the United Nations aid, mud huts still provide most of the living accommodation. Dilapidated by the wind and the rains, they house 7-10 people each.

In recent years a school, a kindergarten and a hospital have been built. Sports grounds have been laid out, which are also used for youth activities. It is here that meetings take place and camp fires are lit on national holidays.

We were shown around the workshops, where women sew clothes and make blankets for the camp's population, and the farm that grows food for it. The camp was living a busy life, the life of people who had temporarily been torn from their own country. There were no signs of any military organization.

Yet official South African propaganda maintains that the SWAPO camps in Zambia, Angola and other frontline states were set up to train soldiers and officers for the Namibian People's Liberaton Army and therefore pose a potential threat to South Africa. Pretoria has threatened to destroy the camps and wipe out the guerrilla terrorists from the bush.

Commune life

At the camp we were introduced to its 32-year-old director, Leonard Nambahu, an energetic man who is totally dedicated to the job entrusted to him by the SWAPO Central Committee. He joined the organization at the age of 16 and was arrested for his patriotic activities. When he was released he had to flee the country. He was trained as an economist abroad, and dreams of the day when he will be able to return to Namibia and devote himself to rebuilding it and developing its mining industry.

He told us that 4,590 people now lived in the camp. This included 700 children whose parents had either perished at the hand of the punitive forces or were continuing the struggle. Some of them lived in the kindergarten, while others were being fostered by other families.

We asked how life was organized in this little enclave.

"The camp authority," said Leonard Nambahu, "is made up of several small departments: education, health, economics and agriculture, youth and women's affairs, child care... There are also departments of politics and mobilization, and legal affairs. For the most part their names are self-explanatory and perhaps only the last two require elucidation. The department of politics and mobilization is responsible for implementing the political instructions of the SWAPO CC, while that of legal affairs metes out justice if anyone living in the camp violates its rules and regulations. So far," he added, "there have been no such cases."

"And what about the military preparations, armed raids and terrorism about which your enemies have raised such an outcry?"

"That's all nonsense," Leonard replied. "Come and see for yourself how we live, work and rest."

The director's Toyota, its tyres churning the sandy ground, took us on a tour of the camp.

Our first stop was the hospital. I understood why it had been his choice when I met the lady in charge. On learning who I was, Ndaham Mthoko immediately begged: "Please talk Russian—I've missed hearing the language."

It turned out that she was a graduate of the Kiev Medical Institute. At the camp hospital she was the only diplomaed physician on the staff. She was helped by local women who worked as nurses and auxiliaries. Rubbing her eyes, Ndaham explained that during the night a baby had been born.

At the time 20 hospital beds were occupied and another 50 people had come to the out-patients' clinic.

"Why so many?" The doctor repeated my question. "Well, the camp is always short of water and drugs. The most frequent ailments are malaria and dysentery, along with respiratory diseases."

Ndaham said that in the Soviet Union she had not only been given excellent medical training, but, what is perhaps even more important, she had learnt to live in friendship and respond to the troubles of others.

"Nor am I the only one," she added. "Make sure you stop off at the farm, where a friend of mine, Rosa Engombe, works as chief vet. She too trained in the Soviet Union."

It was somewhat later that we visited the farm. First we met other camp inmates.

Rhona Halwecndo worked in the sewing workshop. She spoke rapidly, passionately, as if afraid that she would not have time to say all she wanted.

"I have four children," she said, "and I came to the camp because I could no longer stand the constant persecution in my own country. The occupation authorities were hounding my husband and myself, although all we were doing was trying to open people's eyes to what the puppet 'interim government' was doing to our country. The whole world now knows that the indigenous population of Namibia lives in poverty. The average income of a white man is 24 times greater than that of a black. Five thousand white farmers own more than 80 per cent of fertile land, while 120,000 African farmers are forced to make do with just 6 per cent.

"Here," she continued, "we have founded the first independent enterprise that operates on different principles—without exploitation and forced labour. All that we produce we give to our people."

The workshop had working facilities for about 40 people. It was well kept. We could see neat piles of ready goods —children's underwear, school uniforms, blankets.

"And this," Rhona said, "is our special pride." She showed us a white wedding dress. "In a few days' time it will be ready for the happy occasion."

On the door I noticed a colourful poster with a verse on it. Roughly translated it went something like this:

If you are not happy,
Come live with me.
I shall be your light.

I asked who wrote the verse, and was told the author was one of the women workers.

Care for children

Helena Haimbanga has been in charge of the kindergarten for seven years.

"There are 25 of us working here: teachers, cooks, cleaners and voluntary helpers," she said. "We all get on very well. Life is never quiet with the children, and we have our share of problems. There is a shortage of beds, and there are not enough toys. But we do everything we can to ensure that the children grow up healthy, kind and intelligent. After all, they are the future of an independent Namibia. We combine games, dances and learning songs and poems with simple duties. The elder children help with the younger ones."

SWAPO youth league members.

We were surrounded by a group of children. Prompted by their teacher they sang for us—a song about a free Namibia.

We heard more about the children from the school teacher, whose name unfortunately I did not note. He showed us round the school grounds, on which stood a number of prefabricated buildings and the usual huts made of branches and twigs. It reminded me of a trip to Byelorussia my journalistic career took me on ten years ago where during the Great Patriotic War partisan units had their headquarters. There, too, schools right in the forests had been organized for the children: the same improvized benches, boards and visual aids. I was looking at much the same picture again. True, funds provided by the United Nations had been used to set up lingaphone facilities, equip several classrooms properly and organize workshops. And although for the moment this is not the general picture, the teacher was already looking into the future:

"In an independent Namibia," he said, "we shall make education available to all. All pupils will be treated equally—there will be no racial discrimination. How I wish that time would come soon!"

When we finally reached the farm we were welcomed by Rosa Engombe.

"Everything you see here," she said, "I learnt in the Soviet Union."

And we saw a lot. The farm kept chickens, rabbits and pigs. We arrived at meal-time and saw the people come to the collective kitchen for their food. Rosa and her staff had contributed to providing it.

Cultivating optimism

Hakaye Aicicellah was born in 1958. He started school in Namibia, but was expelled for patriotic activities. In 1975 he joined SWAPO, but because of persecution he was forced to flee to Angola. Later he studied in Zambia at the United Nations Institute for Namibia. Today he runs the SWAPO youth league in the camp. He prefers not to talk about himself, but is willing to speak for hours about his country, Namibia.

"We Namibians," he said, "have the right to freedom and happiness. Our country has everything necessary to give us that: fertile land, an excellent climate, an industrious people, and vast mineral deposits. However, Namibia has now been turned by the South African authorities into a prison for my people. We support SWAPO—it is our sole legitimate representative. We demand real independence, not a fraudulent show. And we are bringing up our young people in that spirit."

At this point the director of the camp, Leonard Nambahu, joined in the conversation: "The youngsters' studies and work prepare them for life in an independent Namibia of which they will be masters. We do a lot to educate people here in the camp. We teach them the ethics of the future, explain the aims of SWAPO and keep them informed about the international situation. The struggle for peace, against nuclear catastrophe is a good school, for we need freedom in a peaceful world. The children in the camp send letters to Reagan and to international organizations demanding a halt to war preparations."

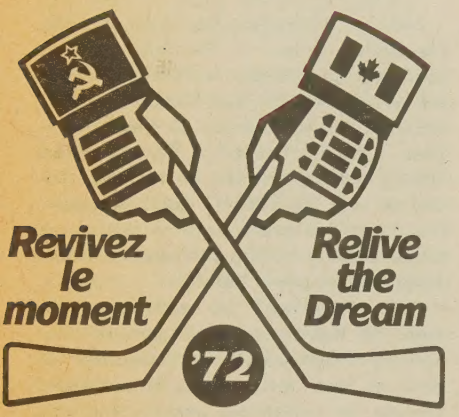
The youth secretary added: "I am confident that a free and independent Namibia will pursue an active peace policy, a policy of solidarity and friendship with all nations."

Darkness fell and we were still discussing the future of Namibia with the leaders of the camp in the Zambian forest. We had no light, because their small generator could provide it only for an hour and a half at most.

But there was light in my heart because I had met and talked to people convinced of the righteousness of their cause, who firmly believed that their country's hour of freedom was at hand.

Lusaka

Highlights relived



"You can't turn the clock back," goes the adage, and nobody would challenge it. And yet tens of thousands of Canadians had an extraordinary opportunity to relive some of the highlights of sporting history when Soviet players, whose names are widely known in Canada, visited the birthplace of ice hockey. Fifteen years ago they were members of the Soviet national team that played a series of matches with top Canadian professionals. The matches were held in both countries. The Soviet team won three games, and drew one, losing four to the Canadians. The Soviet players scored 32 goals, to the Canadians' 31. The crucial winning goal in the fourth game was scored by Paul Henderson, with a help from Phil Esposito, 34 seconds before the end of play.

The matches held in 1972 were dubbed "the series of the century" in Canada. This may seem an exaggeration or a journalistic cliché, but only to those who are unaware of what ice hockey means to Canadians. That exciting series was a revelation to them and the whole sporting world. Soviet players had made a convincing claim that they could take on Canadian professionals as equals.

The idea of staging a repeat of the "series of the century" was enthusiastically received in Canada. In a colourful booklet issued on the occasion of the veterans' friendly games, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Minister of State Fitness and Amateur Sport Otto John Jelinek and Soviet Ambassador to Canada Alexei Rodionov extended a welcome to the participants. The Soviet veterans' visit was widely covered by the media and attracted the attention of the public. The Soviet team was accosted by local journalists at Newfoundland's Gander airport where the Aeroflot plane touched down. Leading newspapers in Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa featured pictures and interviews with Vladislav Tretyak, Alexander Yakushev and other heroes of the historic 1972 series. Before every game the players and the spectators paid tribute to the memory of Vsevolod Bobrov and Valery Kharlamov by a minute of silence.

The three games attracted more than 40,000 spectators who I am sure felt they got their money's worth. On the eve of the game in Montreal I watched two leading National Hockey League teams, the Montréal Canadians and the Philadelphia Flyers, play in the same famous Forum Stadium. I can attest that the veterans drew more applause than the young professionals. Bobby Clark (who, incidentally, captained the Canadian veterans' team) said that while the young professionals played a fast and tough game, they often lacked real skill. This was true, he thought, even of the top stars. There are now not six, but twenty-one teams in the NHL. Because of the great demand for ice hockey players, competition among young players is not as tough as it was.

But this is a separate subject and I have only touched upon it in order to stress that Canadian hockey fans appreciated the skill of the veterans. All three games, and especially the last one, in Ottawa (it was a 8:8 draw) had spectators spellbound. Even the pace of the game was remarkable. And some veterans, especially Ivan Cournoyer, displayed amazing speed for their age. What everybody liked was the sportsmanlike behaviour of the rivals and their respect for each other.

The same friendly atmosphere prevailed at meetings of veterans outside the arena. All were interested to know how each other's lives had developed after they retired from big-time sport. Bobby Clark is general manager of the Philadelphia Flyers and Serge Savard holds a similar position with the Montréal Canadians. Vyacheslav Starshinov is head of the physical training department at the Moscow Institute of Engineering Physics and is about to submit his doctoral thesis. Pat Stapelton has become a model farmer. Evgeny Zimin is a TV sports correspondent. Alexander Yakushev is studying at the Trainers' Higher School. Cournoyer has bought a restaurant, which, incidentally, catered to the Soviet players during their stay in Montreal.

Having won two games out of three, the Canadians won the first veterans' friendly match. This is partly explained by the fact that most Soviet players (15 of whom took part in the 1972 matches) had hardly practised since they retired from the national team and their clubs, and got together for a warm-up only shortly before the trip, while their Canadian counterparts usualy play in veterans' teams in their free time to keep fit and to boost the image of ice hockey. We should take a leaf from their book. There are many such teams in Canada and they take part in various tournaments organized by the Canadian Old Timers' Hockey Association. The association initiated the latest veterans' matches.

The association president, Larry Regan, and many other organizers and participants in the veterans' games felt that the spring 1987 series was a success. The biggest winner was ice hockey. So strengthening our sporting ties is worth the effort.

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Annual show of twenty

The art gallery at 28 Malaya Gruzinskaya Street is again drawing crowds of art lovers. The group of Moscow artists known as the Twenty is having its spring show.

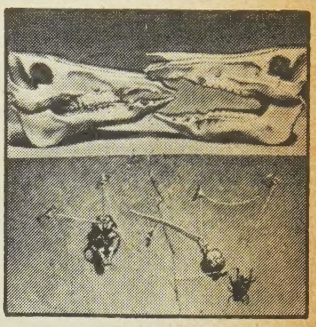
Its first exhibition, in 1977, was something of a sensation. The original style, the unusual subject matter, indeed the artists themselves—sharp-tongued debaters—were not to the taste of all. "Who needs that sort of art?" some said. But time has shown that the world of Soviet art would be the poorer without such exhibitions. They attract between 70,000 and 80,000 viewers every year, among them art collectors, always on the lookout for something worth acquiring.

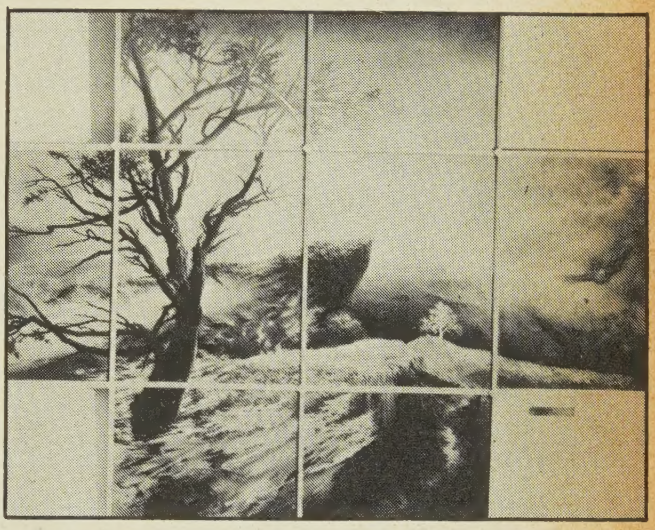
Ten years ago it seemed that in another year or so the artists would settle down, fall in with the general stream, find their own particular furrow and follow it. But again they exhibited pictures that puzzled the spectators, evoked indignation and disputes. Their canvases are innocent of the cryptic code of abstract shapes and lines. The Twenty proclaim themselves continuers of the realistic tradition of Russian and West European painting. The objects are easily recognizable, but how strange, at times fantastic are the combinations in which they are presented! But do not be in haste to dismiss them offhand—look more closely, ponder a little, ask. . . .

Two skulls gnawing at each other—"Still life" by Vladislav Provotorov. "What is that about, Vladislav?"

"About the consequences of senseless enmity in the world."

Interest in the Twenty is not confined to their work. Today, when there is so much serious

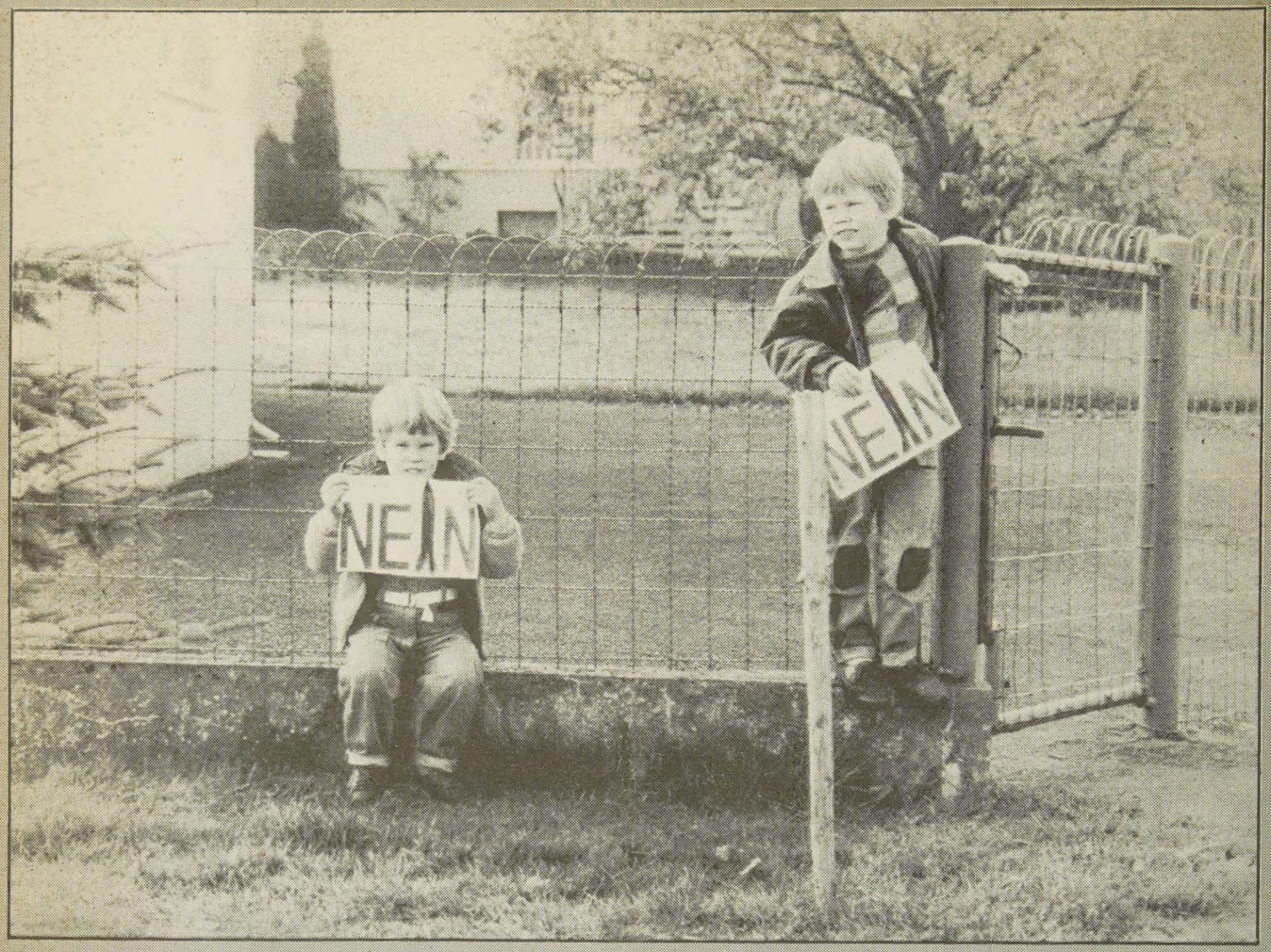




and fruitful discussion about the future of artists' associations, the organizational form in which this group functions merits attention. It is an independent community of like-minded artists, where art, not careers, is the principal subject of debate; which has no cumbersome administrative apparatus, does not expect subsidies but, on the contrary, nets substantial income from its work. In a word, it is very much like those schools, circles and studios that existed in the early post-revolutionary years. And that explains its constant quests, its striving for renewal, and its unwaning popularity. And also why thousands of art lovers look forward every year to the spring show on Malaya Gruzinskaya.

- **Sergei Bleze. "Juno"**
- **Vladislav Provotorov. "Still Life"**
- **Yuri Mironov. "The Awakening"**

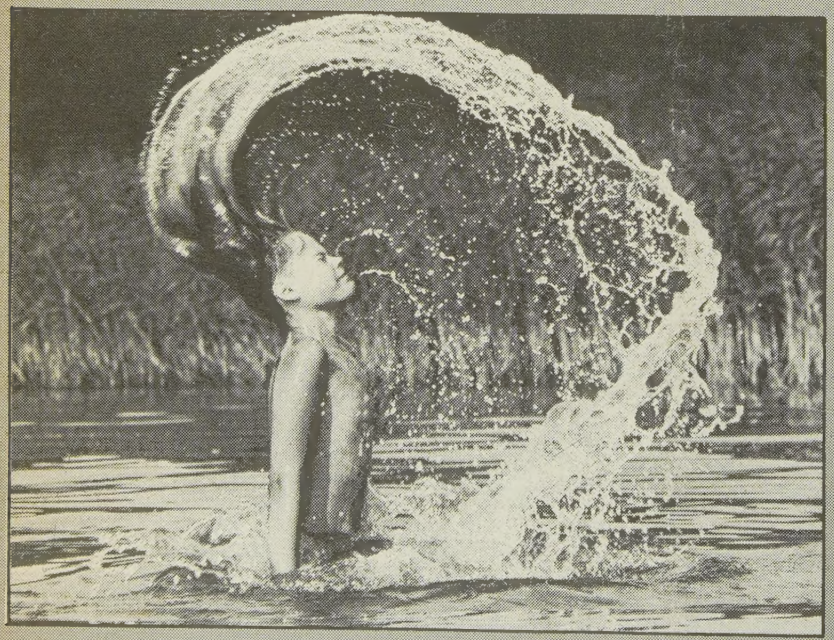
Photos by V. Belov



West German children.
"We don't need missiles!"

Soner Gürler (Turkey)

Joy of life.



MAN AND MANKIND

INTERNATIONAL CONTEST

Dieter Urban (G.D.R.)

ИНДЕКС 70622 НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ